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RICHARD A.
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AGNOSTICISM AND THEISM IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

Agnosticism & Theism

in the Nineteenth Century

AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

Six Lectures

BY

RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY

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PREFACE

THE Lectures contained in this volume represent the last of Richard Armstrong's contributions to the chosen subject of his thought and study. They were prepared for popular audiences, and had been received at Nottingham and Northampton, the only places in which they were delivered, with an interest that gave promise of far reaching usefulness and influence. It was felt that they displayed in a high degree all the best characteristics of Mr. Armstrong's expositions. They are indeed models of lucidity, candour, and sincerity, and in the largeness and generosity of their appreciation and sympathy they show that Mr. Armstrong's mind was deepening and mellowing as well as strengthening up to the very end.

His death has disappointed the hopes of many expectant audiences ; but it was impossible to allow utterances of such weight to be withheld from the public and (with a single exception) the manuscript was so complete as to render the task of preparing it for the press a light one. The second part of the third lecture, indeed, has not been reduced to a form that admitted of its publication ; and a note will be found in the proper place explaining the course that

PREFACE

has been adopted in regard to it ; but in all other respects the modifications that the editor has allowed himself to introduce into the manuscript are few and slight and do not in the smallest degree affect the argument. The whole scheme of the lectures is laid before the reader exactly as it was planned and executed by Mr. Armstrong, but it must be borne in mind that he had had no opportunity of revising the lectures, or considering suggestions that had been made, by one at least of his hearers. Careful notes of reference show how scrupulously these would have been weighed had Mr. Armstrong's life been prolonged.

P. H. W.

Childrey, May 5, 1905.

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‘For much of the Agnosticism of the age, the Gnosticism of the theologians is undeniably responsible. They have inconsiderately overstrained the language of religion till its meaning breaks: and the coherent thinker easily picks up its ruins to show that they can contain nothing.’—*James Martineau, Study of Religion, Preface, p. xi.*

Agnosticism and Theism in the Nineteenth Century

LECTURE I

INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES OF THE FIRST HALF
CENTURY: SHELLEY, WORDSWORTH, JOHN
STUART MILL, AND THOMAS CARLYLE

IT is clear that we have before us in the title of these Lectures a subject of dimensions which must defy adequate treatment in six addresses of a single hour each. Let us then begin our voyage by throwing excessive cargo overboard, and limit ourselves to such measure of merchandise as we may reasonably hope, with favourable breezes, safely to steer to port. Our theme is Agnosticism and Theism in the Nineteenth Century. But I propose to confine our study to such writers as have brought a direct influence to bear on

English thought, and those all of them such as have written in our English mother-tongue, be they English, Scottish, or American. Nor shall we deal with such as have made their appeal chiefly to philosophers and theologians, but only those who have written largely for the general public, the vast mass who are neither specialists nor scholars, but simply thoughtful Englishmen, who care much whether we can know anything of the tremendous problems of God and Man and the Universe. And we shall chiefly deal with the second half of the century. There have been certain writers who stand out conspicuous in influence on the last two generations of our countrymen. Of these we shall have to speak.

In the main, then, we shall be concerned with writers who have lived within the memory of the older ones amongst us now; and to some of us the names which will come in for much handling will call up memories of very keen debate and agitations of the public mind. Huxley and Tyndall, for instance: what scenes of battle do their names recall! It seems worth while to try to catch and fix

something of the dramatic vividness of the conflicts which they aroused before their figures, as they were in their prime, have faded back into the misty regions of unremembered history.

We may then roughly take our period to be the second half of the nineteenth century. The great majority of any public audience of to-day were born within its limits ; very few were more than children in its opening year, —the year of that great exhibition which was to inaugurate the era of universal peace.

But I propose to limit our subject-matter in a still more important way. I propose to rule out all those writers who rest their chief argument in favour of the religious beliefs they hold on any authority external to the mind itself. I do not now discuss the value or validity of such authority. We know that the vast mass of religious teachers lay the utmost stress upon it in one or other of its historical forms. Some hold that to the Church the Divine Being has given infallible guidance in matters of faith. Some maintain that infallibility is concentrated in the single

person of the Pope, speaking on faith or morals from his official seat. Protestantism in its less intelligent forms stoutly avers that the Bible is an authority which a Christian may not go behind. Almost all Christendom holds that at any rate the actual words of Jesus Christ are absolute and authoritative truth on all matters which they touch. And so all these have an appeal outside individual judgment or conscience, which they deem final and ultimate, on the nature of God and his relation to man.

But when challenged, one and all of these are forced after all, in the end, to rely on the workings of their own minds, the workings of their own individual intelligence. '*Why* do you think that the Church or the Pope or the Bible is an infallible authority?' we say to them; and whether it be Thomas Aquinas or Cardinal Newman or some Protestant scholar that we challenge, he has no choice but to adduce reasons, good or bad, from the resources of his own understanding, before he can ask us to accept the authority on which he himself professes to take his stand. Even

teachers as broad and progressive as Dr. John Watson or Dr. Horton, who allege no other infallible and authoritative voice than that of Jesus himself, are liable to a like challenge and a like logical necessity. They must adduce some reasoning drawn from the resources of their own minds before they can demand of us that we should accept the final authority of the word of Christ. Always and of logical necessity the infallibility itself requires reasoning which is fallible, to legitimate its claims and set it in the seat of judgment.

Therefore, I propose in these addresses to confine our study to such teachers as do not require us to recognize beforehand the infallible authority of any Church, or Man, or Book, but recognize frankly and to the full that it is, in the nature of things, impossible for any man to base his ultimate belief on any other basis than the resources of his own spiritual and intellectual being.

We shall, then, be concerned only with the argument as it is carried on by such as agree in seeking the foundations of belief in

the mind or spirit of the individual man. But among such there is an age-long conflict which is to be the subject of all our discourse,—a discussion the most momentous and most absorbing which can engage the human mind.

Is there or is there not behind this scene of things, behind the boundless universe revealed to us each night when the dome of heaven is clear, behind the conscious souls of men, behind that chain of sequence which the doctrine of Evolution has taught us to recognize, behind the inflexible reign of law which we discover presiding in realm after realm of our investigation, a Living, Conscious Power in some sort akin to ourselves, working through agency in some transcendent way co-ordinate with that which in ourselves we call Intelligence and Will? Is there or is there not? And if there is, is it possible for us to know that there is, and to acquire any sort of knowledge of its nature and its working?

Those are the supreme questions which the mind of man can ask. The mind of man for ever asks them. Sometimes it seems that the answer has been given, that the contro-

versy should close. But anon in new language or in new phrases these questions are asked again. Is there or is there not a Living, Conscious Power behind these worlds of matter and of mind? And if there is, can we surely know it and know somewhat of its nature and its working?

And three several answers have been given,—given in a multitude of tongues by a myriad of voices. One answer is, ‘No, there is no such Power.’ That is the solemn, awful answer of the Atheist. A second answer is, ‘Yes, there is such a Power.’ That is the solemn, tremendous answer of the Theist. A third answer is, ‘We cannot tell; and even if there is, we cannot know it, nor have knowledge of its nature or its working.’ That answer is sometimes given gladly, as if some vast incubus of superstition which was crushing humanity had been rolled away. Sometimes it is given sadly, as if a beautiful dream had been dissolved in the human soul. That answer, in our time, has come to be called the answer of the Agnostic.

Some generations back the answer of the

Atheist had a considerable vogue. Now it was a pæan of rejoicing, now it was a dirge of despair. But now, in Western Europe, definite, dogmatic denial of God has almost died down, though surging up now and again for a passing moment in limited areas. The world has known great and noble Atheists, but for the most part sheer and positive Atheism has died down, or perhaps it would be fairer to say has, by a process of evolution, developed into Agnosticism, the answer which says that we cannot know whether God exists, nor, if he does, can we have any real knowledge of him. Agnosticism and Theism then are the two mighty combatants wrestling on the arena of human thought. It is Agnosticism and Theism that we are to consider in these addresses.

Our subject is to be Agnosticism and Theism in England in the second half of the nineteenth century. But we cannot launch into that without a glance at the thought of the preceding period. It is usual to regard the mighty convulsion of the French Revolution near the end of the eighteenth century

as the starting-point of the stream of ideas and influences into which we ourselves were born. The real starting-point from which these spring was the first awakening of the mind of man; and even the most stupendous convulsions and the vast flood of contemporary events in which they emerge, are on the large scale only incidents. Nevertheless, the French Revolution marked the rising to the surface of new and pregnant ideas and aspirations, and the course of thought in England since that day bears the mark of the forces which then became patent. The Revolution was marred by exaggerations, excesses, and appalling tragedies which make it difficult for us even yet justly to appreciate its significance. But it is, I think, safe to say that the Revolution—a revolution spiritually extending far beyond the limits of the territory of France—marked the emergence in unprecedented strength and vitality of the conception of the essential worth of humanity, the native dignity of man as man. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, these three, outline in their conjunction a view of the rights and claims of men which can

never really be superseded by any other conceivable ideal. First, the human being has inalienable right to be master of his own manhood. Secondly, no man can rightly claim to infringe the manhood of another, since all are equal in their status as human beings. Thirdly, the true relation of the multitude of men is that of brotherhood.

These, the ideas of the Revolution, scored as with fire the souls of two Englishmen, both poets, who saw the dawn of the nineteenth century ; and each of these in his own way affected the mind of England and left his mark upon her thought.

The two English poets to whom I refer are of course Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Wordsworth. Their brilliant and glittering contemporary, Byron, felt the sweep of the emotion of the Revolution, too ; but his nature was not noble enough to seize it in its ideal form. The revolt against human tyranny which beat in it, swept over him too, and set him passionately to work for the emancipation of the Greeks. But it wrought no spiritual regeneration in him, and he has

left no great message working still in the veins of society. But the spirit of the Revolution shaped itself in those other two to noble issues.

As touching the answers to be given in the nineteenth century to the question of Agnosticism or Theism, both Shelley and Wordsworth had things to say which would tell on the English mind for long. In Shelley, if not the really fundamental, yet certainly the most conspicuous and obvious message was the *revolt* of the Revolution. He had all its fervour for the Rights of Man, for Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, and he saw that God as presented in the dominant churches was a tyrant denying those rights and crushing those aspirations. The orthodox God was an idol of man's own device. The irreligion, the worldliness, the selfishness rampant in the Church of England a hundred years ago was, in his view, the fruit of a blasphemous idolatry. And while Methodism was a revolt on one side against the established ecclesiasticism, the poems of Shelley were a revolt against it on the other side. It

may seem a paradox to couple Wesley and Shelley together as allies. But allies for all that, they were. And at the heart of either revolt was a passionate desire for the destruction of a kingdom of lies and a return to a spirit of love after the mind of Christ.

Shelley saw that the religion which was always on the side of the oppressor was a parody of Christianity. And to the God of such a Christianity he was Atheist to the core. But it was the very intensity of his conviction that the spirit of beauty and of love lay in the inmost heart of nature that fanned the flame of that Atheism. And Shelley not only smote with sinewy thews the Dagon or Zeus which men had set up as God, —but he breathed into those whom his message reached such sense of the graciousness of nature that he helped to prepare the way for a revival of that better Christianity which, with Jesus, sees in the lily and the bird, in the sunshine and the rain, the witness to a God of nature who himself is the essence of love and of the beautiful. If Shelley was Atheist, he was atheist in the ultimate in-

terests of Theism, and he diffused an atmosphere in which men might come to know God again in that heart-intimacy in which he was known long ago by the founder of Christianity.

But a poet was born twenty years before Shelley and survived him by more than another twenty years, who is of far greater significance for the religious thought and temper of future generations of this English people. And Wordsworth, little honoured in the earlier part of his career, sends a beam of calm, still light shining down the century in the rays of which more and more of the wise and discreet have rejoiced from the days in which he wrote, down to the beginning of this new century, of which the young men of to-day have in trust the making.

Wordsworth felt the ideal of the Revolution beating at his heart, and in early youth left his Cumberland dales to breathe the agitated air of France. But the pure and solemn aspects of nature had already sunk deep into his soul, and he could not long endure a life in which political tumult drove

out the calm, slow contemplation which was the primal necessity of his temperament. And when the fever of the Revolution had worn itself out in the young man's veins, he returned to communion with nature, only that, as one of his most devout students puts it, the love of Nature was 'shorn of its old despotism; it was subdued to a dominant scheme of thought, and became fellow inmate in his mind with the love of man, and with a deep sense of the pathos of things.'

The terrible disappointment of the Revolution, ending, as it seemed, in tragedy and chaos, threw the poet back upon deeper reflection on the mystery of life and being than he had known as yet; and he emerges with a soul chastened by its deep experiences, and turned to a grave and earnest study of the world in which we live and the nature we are of, by which he became the supreme poet, and to not a few the supreme prophet, of the century in which he lived.

For he saw two things with more piercing vision than any who had spoken before him, the living soul in nature, which is God, and

the unity of man with nature. The same spirit expressed itself in the flower, the stars, the stream, and the firm and enduring rock, which expresses itself in the unchanging law of the moral world. That spirit, whatever it be called, essentially is God; and Wordsworth never hesitated to call it by that solemn name. It is a spirit which may be read everywhere, if only we will be still, and let the hidden secrets be spoken to our souls. We must put away from us the rush and hurry. As a man like Richard Jeffreys or W. L. Long only learns the secrets of the birds and small creatures of the wood by utter quietness and stillness, so only to that attitude of mind does the power that is in river or in mountain tell its mystery. But when once it has been told, it can never be doubted more. And so God spoke to Wordsworth in this holy language as he has spoken to but few of his chosen sons.

But the rarest peculiarity of Wordsworth is that he looked into the heart of *man* in the same still waiting way as that in which he gazed into the core of the world of mountain-

slope and woody gorge. The simpler the human being, the more the poet had to learn from him. The ancient beggar, the leech-gatherer, the child, from these he read the deepest secrets of all. And by this patient, loving observance, year after year, he came to know how the law of the same God who shapes the hills moves through the soul of man,—a law severe and stern, yet if we receive it and obey it, benignant, tender, nay, secreting joy and gladness even in a world deeply acquainted with grief. And so, though no real poet's creed aptly fits itself into the clauses of a theological system, Wordsworth became the greatest conservator of ultimate religious truth in the English literature of the nineteenth century. His thought has now diffused itself into the atmosphere of our time. He has given us a background of religious feeling on which we can securely set forth such doctrine of God and Man as philosophy may ultimately declare consonant with reason and with fact. And if the young are still often impatient with him, in many an old man's heart he has unsealed the fountains of peace.

But if the poet may charge the atmosphere with feeling congenial to a strong affirmative faith, it is to those more exact thinkers called philosophers that we must look for the more precise methods by which the critical understanding itself is to be persuaded. And it must be confessed that the philosophical tone of the first half of the century seemed to give little promise of a powerful revival of intellectual religious belief.

The earlier part of the nineteenth century in England saw a group of men of powerful and machine-like intellect who, like the poets, had been deeply influenced by the Revolution. But while they had their enthusiasms, and were actuated by a very genuine love of justice and desire of human welfare, the understanding was a more conspicuous element of their composition than the emotions. It is sufficient to refer to the famous Jeremy Bentham and to his close friend and ally, James Mill, distinguished father of a yet more distinguished son. We have heard of the 'hard' school of theologians. I am afraid these and such as these must be des-

cribed as the 'hard' school of philosophers. While Wordsworth held the Imagination a priceless instrument of truth, James Mill devoted all his powers to training his son to trust no other guide to truth than the strictly logical faculty. Experience as the only ground of belief, utility as the only test of conduct, the logical understanding as the only criterion of truth, these principles cradled the infant mind of John Stuart Mill; and his final convictions concerning the doctrines of Theism are of unique interest, inasmuch as they show the ultimate product of the training in the case of a man of the purest and loftiest character combined with an almost unparalleled critical faculty. His Essay on Theism was, it is true, not written till late on in the sixties. But I present some analysis of it here, out of its chronological order, to show the strictly logical result of the kind of thinking so marked in the circle from which he sprang, when it lay in the soil of a spirit tuned to all that is sweet and pure in human character. The old hard scepticism of the twenties and thirties is there, it is true, rigid

and unbroken still; but it is shot through with a manifest yearning for a richer and more affirmative faith.

Mill opens this profoundly interesting essay with an expression of satisfaction that since the days of most eager debate, the discussion has begun to be conducted with a 'more softened temper.' The radicals no longer think that they can bring about the regeneration of mankind by merely exploding its superstitions, an expectation from which his own father was certainly not emancipated. The argument *pro* and *contra* can now be nicely weighed without such quakings of passion on either side as disturb the hang of the balance.

He sets out by showing that only after science had made some progress could a monotheistic faith arise. Science finds that every phenomenon is preceded by another phenomenon which appears to bring it about, a phenomenon which we call its cause; nay, by a host of concurrent phenomena, the co-operation of which was essential to its production. It is therefore inevitable that, if a scientific man believe in the supernatural at

all, he should believe in one God who rules over all these phenomena, and not in a multitude of different wills and impulses working in total disregard to each other. But modern science shows further that there is a perfect network of phenomena, both causes and effects, covering the whole range of nature, all hanging together; so that if there be will working them at all, it must be one Will,—a supreme God from whom the whole sum of the phenomena of the universe flows forth in order and in concert.

The supreme question then is whether, as there is an antecedent to the falling of an apple or the banging of a door, which antecedent we call the cause thereof, there is or was likewise an antecedent to the whole immeasurable complex of phenomena which we call Nature or the Universe,—an antecedent which is its definite cause or origin,—something but for which Nature itself would not have been. ‘The only answer,’ says Mill, ‘which has long continued to afford satisfaction is Theism.’

Has science, then, anything to say which

ought at the outset to bar that answer out? Nothing whatever, says Mill, provided that the Divine Being thus supposed, act not capriciously, but by 'invariable laws.' On that condition, it is not incompatible with science even to suppose that he brings about each and every particular event by a separate and specific act of will. There is nothing in science to disprove all this. No; but is there anything to prove it?

Mr. Mill proceeds to lay it down that any really scientific argument for Theism must be drawn from the facts and analogies of human experience in the like fashion as the geologist or astronomer argues from the facts of the physical world. It is quite unscientific, he thinks, to infer aught concerning the being God merely 'from ideas or convictions of our minds,'—a rule which shuts out large fields of the argument of such theists as Martineau, Theodore Parker, and Francis Newman. Having thus restricted the scope of discussion, Mill weighs four several great theistic arguments, that from the need of a First Cause, that from the general consent of man-

kind, that from consciousness, and that from marks of design in nature.

First, then, the argument that we must have a First Cause. Mill faces the common (and as I believe most true) contention that Mind is the only possible source of Force, and therefore the only possible First Cause, by contending on the contrary that all volition, or will-power, known to us has itself to draw on the chemical forces of the body for its own efficiency. So far then as experience warrants an induction, that induction is that volition or will cannot itself be the independent originator of the forces which carry on the world. Will is at best one form of force. If it can originate phenomena at all, it only shares that prerogative with heat and light and chemical action. Whatever stands in the way of any one of these being regarded as the First Cause of all that is, stands equally in the way of Will being that First Cause,—so far as science can pronounce.

‘Theism, therefore,’ says Mr. Mill, ‘in so far as it rests on the necessity of a First Cause, has no support from experience.’

To those who abandon the argument for Mind as the First Cause of the Universe based on the facts of science, and resort to the argument from intuition,—the argument that we cannot but believe in Mind as the originating power,—Mr. Mill shows little mercy. He says that there is much more evidence of Matter and Force having always existed than of Mind having always existed; and that our experience only warrants us in saying that things which have had a beginning must have a cause, whereas there is no evidence that Matter or Force ever had a beginning.

Passing over the chapter on the argument from the general consent of mankind, in which Mr. Mill contends that as a matter of fact there has not been such a general consent, and that if there had, the appeal to it as evidence of the truth of theism suggests that the Theist is afraid to rely on the considerations on which mankind has based the belief itself, we come to the third argument for Theism, that based on consciousness. All such argument Mill considers scientifically

illegitimate, because it appeals, not to 'the facts and analogies of human experience,' but to 'some imaginary truths of reason which are independent of experience.' Many claims of this sort have been put forth in the history of human thought. Mr. Mill's reply to them one and all is that your declaration that *you* are directly conscious of God cannot be any possible argument to the man who finds in his own bosom no corresponding consciousness whatsoever. And if, as is sometimes the case, the man claiming to have immediate consciousness of God, assures his neighbour that he has the like consciousness if he would only confess it to himself, Mr. Mill thinks it is at least as probable that the prophet is mistaken as that other people have a consciousness of which they protest themselves utterly unconscious.

Let me say at once,—inasmuch as many of the witnesses to God whom we shall interrogate will be found to take the line which Mr. Mill here so vigorously impugns,—that while I believe with my whole soul that there are saints and prophets who in fact have a

real, vivid, and unmistakable perception of God as a living presence, I admit that that in itself can never be an argument which will hold good for the man who is unconscious of any such presence about him or within him. It is useless as a weapon of debate. The office of the prophet is not to argue with the logical understanding, but to evoke in other men a consciousness corresponding to his own.

And so Mill approaches the fourth argument for Theism, that namely from marks of design in Nature. This argument, he says, is at last 'of a truly scientific character.' It is 'wholly grounded on experience.' Its method is unimpeachable. The only question is whether it makes good its results.

The argument is that there are many things in nature which bear an analogy to things made by human intelligence, so that there is some real ground to suppose that they also are the product of an intelligent agent. Especially it is noticeable that many apparently independent conditions often conspire together to produce the particular result. But such conspiracy of a multitude of

means to a single end is a recognized mark of intelligent agency. Therefore, there is a real scientific inductive argument that these things are produced by an intelligent being working to a specific end.

But at the time that Mill wrote this essay, the momentous Darwinian theory was just offering another explanation of such wonderful combinations as have gone to produce such organs as the eye, the ear, or the hand. The theory of 'the survival of the fittest' seemed to compete with intelligent design as a possible explanation of the marvels of the vegetable, animal, and human organisms. Mill is rather sceptical whether this new theory can ever make itself good. But he sees in it a serious threat to the argument from design. Yet he sums up the section on the Argument from Design by declaring that, even if true, the Darwinian theory is not inconsistent with the belief in an intelligent Creator, and concludes, 'I think it must be allowed that, in the present state of our knowledge, the adaptations in Nature afford a large balance of probability in favour of creation by intelligence.'

Discussing with the same crystal and passionless clearness the attributes of this possible or probable God, Mr. Mill finds the indications to be that he is 'a Being of great but limited power,' 'of great, and perhaps unlimited intelligence, but perhaps, also, more narrowly limited than his power: who desires, and pays some regard to, the happiness of his creatures, but who seems to have other motives of action which he cares for more.' Even of such a God as this there is, he thinks, for us no certainty. 'There is evidence, but insufficient for proof, and amounting only to one of the lower degrees of probability.' The whole domain of the supernatural is, in his view, 'removed from the region of Belief into that of simple Hope.' But that hope, so he earnestly urges, it is wise and right to indulge, since it tends to the elevation and ennoblement of life.

Such is the thin and emasculated Theism to which alone John Stuart Mill was enabled to reach. Its enunciation belongs to a period much later than that to which this preliminary lecture is chiefly dedicated. But in the

precise and scrupulous logic of the argument, in the rigid exclusion of all influence drawn from the emotional side of his nature in spite of the longing which he cannot altogether disguise—a man deeply acquainted with grief and of a most pure and tender heart—we see the grip with which the cold, hard intellectuality of his early training and association still held him, and we realize, as perhaps nothing else could make us realize, the intellectual atmosphere in which so much of the philosophical thought of the twenties and the thirties was bathed and steeped.

We turn finally to a teacher of a totally different type who contributed more perhaps than any other one man to shape the minds of thoughtful Englishmen immediately before the opening of the second half of the nineteenth century. Thomas Carlyle poured scorn on such as concerned themselves with the bickerings of 'Pantheists and Pottheists.' But for all that, it was the strong stroke of his pen that woke up Englishmen to realize that they must have a religion which should be a religion indeed. Mr. Justin McCarthy,

in his reminiscences of the sixties, says that while there were some Englishmen who liked to let Mill do their thinking for them, the acknowledged sovereign in the world of thought was Thomas Carlyle.

In the midst then of all those speculations in which young Mill was reared, a rugged Scot put forth in Fraser's Magazine certain papers compiled in 1833-4, which were the antidote to the hard intellectualism of the Mill and Bentham school. John Mill had been reared to think it a veritable crime to admit into the construction of opinions any considerations other than those of absolute logic. It is true he held the principle that all argument must be based upon experience; but he assumed that purely spiritual experience was no legitimate basis on which to build an argument. Thomas Carlyle was the first in England who with potent voice broke this tradition of the logicians. In the rugged and impassioned phrases of *Sartor Resartus* he laid it down in two great and imperishable chapters that to a whole man Faith was the one thing absolutely needful,—not faith in

this or that theology, but Faith, Affirmation, Conviction; and that the road to Faith was not abstract Speculation, but the Experience of the human soul.

In the quaint and whimsical, but most pathetic, figure of Teufelsdröckh he gives us the autobiography of a soul passing first through Disappointment to Doubt, and from Doubt to Despair, and then through psychological experience to Faith triumphant. Slowly Carlyle's speech, received at first with scoffing or bewilderment, fell drop by drop into the heart's-blood of the English people; and his gospel became one great rallying point of religion and of hope.

How vivid are the pictures which he presents of the storm-tossed German student! At Teufelsdröckh's first awakening from the conventionalities of orthodox belief, we meet him crying in his wild way, 'Is there no God then; or at best an absentee God, sitting idle?'—'shouting question after question into the Sibyl-cave of Destiny, and receiving no Answer but an Echo,'—putting questions which every young man of the day *must* put

if he be not ‘purely a Loghead (*Dummkopf*).’ Yet, says Carlyle, ‘perhaps at no era of his life was he, Teufelsdröckh, more decisively the Servant of Goodness, the Servant of God, than even now when doubting God’s existence.’

But for answer still was there only Echo. ‘To me,’ says Teufelsdröckh, ‘the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility; it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb.’ There was neither God nor Devil of whom to be afraid, yet was life ‘a continual, indefinite, pining fear.’ When suddenly a Thought rose in him: ‘What *art* thou afraid of? . . . Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of Tophet too. . . . Hast thou not a heart? Canst thou not, as a Child of Freedom, trample Tophet itself under thy feet?’ And a stream of fire rushed over the soul of Teufelsdröckh, and he shook base Fear away from him for ever. No longer fear and whining, but indignation and defiance. The Everlasting No had pealed through all his being. ‘Then my whole *Me*

stood up in Protest.' The Everlasting No had said, 'Behold thou art fatherless, out-cast, and the Universe is mine.' But the *Me* made response, '*I* am not thine, but Free, and for ever hate thee.'

So Fear was gone and Manhood had come, and for a while Teufelsdröckh lived neither fearing nor yet hoping. But there came a day when under the blue heavens on a glorious mountain-top, he was 'cast, doubtless by benignant upper Influence, in a healing sleep,' and 'I awoke to a new Heaven and a new Earth.' Fore-shadows, fore-splendours of the Truth fell mysteriously upon his soul. Till in strange, soft whisperings came to him the Evangel, 'the Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres; but god-like and my Father's.'

And this came to him at last because he had never wholly ceased to believe in Duty; had held to it even when he knew not whence came upon him its strange authority. There came to Teufelsdröckh the knowledge that there is a higher blessedness than Happiness. 'Love not pleasure; love God,' was the

behest. Such was 'the Everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved.' And so, not out of speculation, but out of conduct, through experience, was faith built up.

Such was the bold, strong word of the grim Scotchman, cutting clean across the scrupulous reasonings of the utilitarians and sceptical philosophers who trained the younger Mill; and so prose literature in the first half of the century added a plea to the lofty argument of Wordsworth, and helped to prepare the way for a re-constituted Faith to be consolidated in the decades which should succeed.

LECTURE II

RISE OF THE EVOLUTION DOCTRINE : CHARLES
DARWIN, HERBERT SPENCER, AND JOHN FISKE

THE supreme event in the world of thought in the second half of the Nineteenth Century was the extraordinary rapidity with which the conception of Evolution took possession of the field in every province of human study. Men younger than I am can perfectly well remember the time when the very word was unknown in ordinary conversation. To students of the present generation it is the one dominant term to cover the history of every class of phenomena treated by science.

Evolutionary ideas, indeed, had long

played a part in scientific and philosophical investigation. The germs of such ideas may be traced in some of the most ancient modes of thinking known to us. Passing down to modern times, we find Leibnitz in the eighteenth century doing much to prepare the way. Hegel's fundamental conception that the story of the universe is a story of 'becoming' spells Evolution in the broader and vaguer sense. Just at the close of the eighteenth century Laplace first propounded the nebular hypothesis of the origin of heavenly bodies. Lamarck, at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries brought evolutionary ideas to bear on the origin of species. Finally, Von Baer in his *History of the Development of Animals* actually laid down the most essential and characteristic element in what Herbert Spencer finally gave to the world as the definition of Evolution.

But the astonishing conquest of the theory of Evolution over every region of science was mainly due to two great Englishmen whose most momentous writings belong to the early part of the second half of the

nineteenth century. Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published in 1859. Herbert Spencer's *First Principles* appeared in 1862.

The former work paved the way for the second in a very remarkable manner, though the two writers were absolutely independent of each other in their researches and their conclusions. Mr. Darwin was concerned with no general system of philosophy. He simply discussed the problem how species of living things, vegetable and animal, originate, and how they stand correlated to each other. But his facts and his conclusions constituted a particular instance of that mode of regarding the origin of things which Herbert Spencer stamped for all time with the name Evolution. And because Darwin's exposition was so lucid and so vivid, the more thoughtful minds of the time were prepared by the training he had given them to understand the application of a similar theory of origin to all things within the sphere of science in astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology. Darwin elaborated one particular

instance. Spencer carried the Darwinian method into every department of human knowledge. Without Darwin, Spencer would have found a public greatly less prepared. Without Spencer, Darwinism might have remained an isolated speculation without correlation with the general development of human thought.

What then was the theory of the origin of species which Darwin, with such captivating skill, elucidated?

Let us recall as briefly as possible its essential features.

Starting from observation of the methods of the gardener, the pigeon-fancier, and the like, Darwin showed that the origination of practically new kinds of flowers, birds, and so forth, could be brought about by taking advantage of slight individual variations, that by pairing together, for example, two pigeons showing some slight modification in form or colour from the parent bird, and then again in the next generation pairing those of the offspring which had this characteristic in most marked degree, sooner or later a

virtually new sort of pigeon could be brought into being in which that characteristic, indefinitely intensified and strengthened, should be universal and permanent.

That was artificial selection, selection by man, for his own ends. Why should there not be natural selection, selection by nature, leading to results of permanent moment in the economy of nature? But if there be such natural selection,—gradual selection of certain traits in living things to be intensified and strengthened through a long line of slight variations in the individuals of successive generations,—in what principle can we find the determining direction of the change? Why, in that universal struggle for existence among living things by which it is involved that only such as are best fitted for their environment—the conditions in which they have to live—shall survive and propagate their kind. *Pari passu* the great naturalist expounds his theory and produces his instances; until he has built up a book, modest indeed in compass, most modest in manner and in assumption, which was to revolutionize

the science of biology ; convincing all competent judges that the countless species of animals and plants have acquired their several characteristics by the slow accumulation of minute differences through countless generations, and himself concluding with the startling words : ' I believe that animals are descended from at most four or five progenitors, and plants from an equal or lesser number.'

Twelve years later, in 1871, Darwin carried his argument to its inevitable conclusion, and in his 'Descent of Man,' pronounced the human race also to have been developed, under natural selection, by innumerable accumulated minute variations from some group of anthropoid apes, themselves tracing their origin to the humblest of organic things.

The fundamental, the basal, conception, observe, of the Darwinian theory is not the struggle for existence, or even natural selection. Those are only the special causes and agencies belonging to a particular order of phenomena, namely the growth of the animal

and vegetable kingdoms. The fundamental, the basal, conception is gradual modification in innumerable directions through the accumulation of successive minute variations.

But that is the essence of Evolution. Let us turn then to the work of the supreme teacher of the doctrine of Evolution, Herbert Spencer.

The main interest of Herbert Spencer's recently-published Autobiography lies in the story of how the conception of that doctrine gradually dawned upon him, and the long toil, the colossal acquisition, the severe and patient struggle extending over a long span of life, of a man whose health was shattered from the outset, who had no money, who had no public, whose volumes the great organs of opinion hardly noticed, to place before the contemporary world and future generations the marshalled facts and the ordered argument for a philosophy which was to cover the whole area of human knowledge.

In ancient and in mediaeval times it was possible for a single individual practically to gather up all that the mind of man knew,

the sum of existing knowledge. Both Aristotle and Dante went near to this achievement. To attempt to do so in the second half of the nineteenth century was surely the very acme of intellectual audacity. Yet Herbert Spencer at any rate so far covered the field as to show that there is no class of phenomena in the known universe which does not fall under the formula which he propounds and whose history and processes may not be summed up in terms of the doctrine Evolution.

Spencer's self-imposed task was no less than to unify all knowledge. Nor did he bring to bear an *a priori* theory, and then fit the facts into his formula. He marshalled his facts, from the first moving of matter before the beginnings of worlds down to the last nerve-thrill in a human infant or the latest shifting of social relations in organized communities of men, and then asked what theory would cover the whole totality of facts. He analysed all the laws revealed in every province of nature, and then showed that they were from first to last so many examples of a single law covering every process of the cosmos.

That universal law he called the law of Evolution. It is necessary to understand clearly and correctly what it means. The definition necessarily involves several terms requiring individual explanation. But it is worth while to make some steadfast mental effort that they may lie in the mind lucid and accurately outlined.

A large portion of the volume on 'First Principles' is occupied with the explanation and justification of the definition. All that we can undertake here and now is to state the definition in its full and final form, and then with all possible conciseness to state just what its several terms convey.

The final formula is this:—

'Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.' A hard and difficult congeries of words truly for such as are not accustomed to handling the big words of philo-

sophical thinking ; but a bundle of words which it is worth while to try to understand, if it contains within it the key to all the best thinking of the nineteenth century in the scientific field, the essence of the scientific faith furnished with which the twentieth century sets forth on its voyage of discovery through the planets and the suns.

Only the last clause I think we may safely set aside without serious injury to our understanding of what Evolution is. The rest we must religiously go through.

‘ Evolution is an integration of matter and consequent dissipation of motion.’ What does that mean ? It must be firmly grasped at the outset and held in mind throughout, that the Evolution doctrine teaches that the matter of which the universe is composed was originally diffused evenly through space, neither denser nor thinner in one part than another. It is conceived that then this matter was disturbed in such a way that at certain areas it became thicker than elsewhere, that then within each area itself it thickened and thinned unevenly, that then in

each of these smaller areas within the larger areas it thickened and thinned unevenly again, and so on again and again; so that space, which had once been occupied by an even fluid everywhere alike, was now tenanted by myriads of myriads of what were practically separate and individual masses, large or small, each one of which, whether it be a sun millions of miles in girth, or a single grain of sand on our own sea-beach, constitutes a separate object with its parts bound together into one and distinct from all other matter round it. The growth of this individual is called 'an integration of matter,' because all the matter contained in it has become an 'integer' or unit, separate from all other integers or units in the world.

But while the particles of this unit are becoming fixed together, they are at the same time deprived of much of the movement which belonged to them in their primitive condition. They no longer fly freely through space; they are tied up in the constituted object. We know that even in the most solid of things they still vibrate with wonderful and

ceaseless motion. But their motion is greatly circumscribed, confined to minute and infinitesimal limits,—and any movement beyond the limits of these vibrations they can now only share with the whole object of which they form a part. There is then a considerable loss of motion ; and this is true of the constituent particles of all objects whatsoever. Evolution then ‘is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion.’

But still more important and, I think, far more significant, is the next statement of the formula.

Evolution, we are told, is a process during which ‘matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity,’—from indefinite to definite, from incoherent to coherent, from homogeneity to heterogeneity,—which last pair of words are Greek for sameness and otherness. Let us take each of these three pair of terms, and see exactly what it means.

Evolution is a process during which matter passes from indefiniteness to definiteness.

If part of a cloud of star-dust concentrates into a star, or if a particular piece of protoplasm becomes a sea-anemone, it ceases to be part of an indefinite mass and becomes a definite object, capable of definition, having its own boundaries, having its own character and attributes. The matter concerned has passed from the indefinite to the definite.

Evolution is a process during which matter passes from the incoherent to the coherent. Coherent means holding together. Coherent speech is talk that hangs together. Incoherency is the want of mutual relations between the thoughts expressed. If unorganized things become organized, that means that their different parts become bound together in mutual dependence. The bulb of a plant is at first almost without parts, a mere mass. The developed plant has stem and leaves and flower all bound together in mutual dependence. Its parts cohere, are needful to each other. Evolution is a passing of matter from the incoherent to the coherent.

Evolution is a process during which matter passes from homogeneity to hetero-

geneity, that is from sameness to difference. All that we commonly call making or creating consists in setting up differences. To make a boot is to bring together part of a mass of leather, and part of a mass of thread, and part of a mass of iron (and I am credibly informed sometimes also paper), and so fit them together that they become that very individual thing, a boot, which is quite different from the leather and the thread and the iron of which it is made. It is indeed different from any other boot in the world, and still more different from a portmanteau which may be made out of just the same materials. Chemical making is a still more differentiating thing, consists of making a product still more different from that of which it is made. A boot can be recognized at once as leather, thread, and iron. No one could possibly recognize water as so much oxygen and so much hydrogen, or a piece of flesh as so much oxygen and hydrogen and nitrogen and carbon. Evolution starts from sameness and works out into innumerable othernesses. The planet first thrown off by

the sun is a uniform heated mass. It works out by a vast chain of successive changes into rock and water and air, and protoplasm (which itself breaks off into the whole vegetable and animal kingdoms), and minerals and gases, till the whole order of terrestrial objects known to us to-day is achieved. The embryo of an animal is a structure of the utmost simplicity; it passes through the processes of Evolution till there are compassed within it, if it be a vertebrate, skeleton with bones of a hundred variant forms, flesh, blood, brain, nerve,—organs each with its own structure and its own function, all the organs interdependent, all of them contributing to the health and efficiency of the rest. A tribe of men at the beginning are all warriors or all hunters or all tillers of the soil. Difference is added to difference, till you have in the organic community all the trades, professions, occupations of twentieth-century England,—traders, divided into a hundred trades; brain-workers, doctors, solicitors, barristers, surgeons, physicians, accountants, average adjustors, tea-tasters, wine-tasters, professors,

schoolmasters; and then mechanics, hodmen, porters, stone-breakers, clickers, hedgers and ditchers; soldiers, sailors, policemen, watchmen, caretakers, and so on, and so on, and each trade or business or occupation constantly tending to split into two or more branches,—one solicitor conveyancing, another busy in the police-courts, one man making pins' heads, another pins' points. That is Evolution, the indefinite and homogeneous becoming always and always the definite and heterogeneous. And that law obtains everywhere and in all things.

Begin where you will, with the *primaeval* ante-stellar matter, with protoplasm, with a seed or a bulb or an embryo, with an unorganized mass of men, with the first articulate speech, with the first dawn of reason, with the first rude hieroglyphic letters, the law of all things, all classes of phenomena, is bifurcation, forking, dividing into differences; so that every class of things in its history may be likened to a stem which comes one and solid from the ground, then divides into branches, and each branch into lesser boughs,

and each bough into twigs, and each twig putting forth leaves, till from the one stem have come a myriad leaves, no two of just the same size and shape and colour. Evolution from the beginning to the end is a passing of matter from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous, from sameness to otherness, from like to unlike, from the unit to the many. Evolution is a passage of matter 'from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity.' And Evolution is an account of the becomings of all things that have been and are, from the beginning of the cosmos in which we live to this hour that we are met together. Such is the central affirmation of the Philosophy of Herbert Spencer.

The Evolutionist then contemplates the existing universe as having arrived at its present enormous complexity of structure and variety of contents by a continuous process everywhere, and always proceeding. Every new kind of thing has come into being through an unbroken succession of minute variations accumulated till they amount to a

great and important change. This process has always been going on without break or jump. Therefore at no moment can it be said that any absolutely new thing came into being. New things are only old things gradually modified. Spencer therefore will not allow that either life or consciousness were sudden new things in the universe. They were but modifications, differentiations of that which existed before. He really regards all matter that has once begun to undergo evolution as 'alive.' Life he defines as 'the continuous adjustment of internal to external relations.' But all things adjust themselves to their environment; and the idea of life shades away into only one way of thinking of all objects in the world. It is only that a fish or a frog or a fox adjusts itself quickly and vivaciously to its environment, while a rock or a stone does so slowly in the long lapse of ages.

One of the great services that Spencer thus did to philosophy was to point the way to a reconciliation between two antagonistic theories of the processes of the human mind.

On the one hand at least three great British thinkers, Locke and Hume and Mill, had maintained that all knowledge comes from experience, that prior to experience the mind is as it were a blank sheet of paper without ideas of any kind written upon its surface. On the other hand the supreme philosophical thinker of Germany, Emmanuel Kant, had insisted that the mind of a human being by its very constitution has certain innate ideas—such as the conception of space and the conception of time—which are the mould to which all particular thoughts arising from experience are compelled to conform. Spencer's theory of Evolution, which included the gradual growth of the human mind by inheritance through a vast series of successive generations, enabled him to say that the original mind was indeed a blank sheet, but that the experience of all these generations had so consolidated such conceptions as those of space and time that to man as he is now they are given as an original endowment, and are indeed innate ideas to which the individual ideas which a man comes at for himself are necessarily adjusted.

But all this account of the theory of Evolution and its subsidiary adjuncts keeps us back from the urgent question which a religious man must perpetually find springing to his lips when he listens to Spencer's wondrous tale of the growth and the development of the universe in which we live : ' Does all this tend to fortify religion, or does it undermine that sacred structure, sapping its foundations ?'

It is quite plain that if we accept generally the theory of Evolution much that has passed for religion must go. All interferences of God with the order of nature, all the miraculous, all breaks in continuity are challenged and rejected by him who thinks the evolutionary account a true and complete record of what has been and what is. Nor can the evolutionist suppose that one church or one book or one man has absolute or unique authority over human thinking or human conduct. But does Evolution make against belief in God, in a Supreme Ruler of the world, a Divine Spirit, a Heavenly Father with claim on our allegiance and our love ?

First let us see what is the position in

regard to this matter of Herbert Spencer himself, the greatest expositor of the evolutionary idea whom the world has seen.

There are elements of Spencer's teaching which have at any rate a superficial appearance of materialism. The constant study of the phases of mental phenomena rigidly and exclusively in connection with their material concomitants, the motions of nerve and of brain, is apt to produce the impression that consciousness itself is regarded as nothing more than movements of nervous and cerebral matter. But Mr. Spencer very emphatically disclaims the charge of materialism. He cannot be a materialist, if by a materialist you mean one who thinks that matter is the source of all the phenomena of the universe, the bottom cause of all things, for he does not so much as know what matter itself is. He only knows matter as the seat of innumerable motions, a something, the theatre of phenomena, of infinite complexity. What matter in itself is, or how matter itself comes to be, he declares that he can make no shadow of a guess.

But if the word 'matter' be used, as it sometimes is, as a term of degradation or dishonour, as when men speak of 'mere' matter, or 'gross' matter, or 'dead' matter, then he protests. Matter is never gross or dead. In whatever state it be, fluid or solid, it is alive with internal activity. Every lump of lead, every jet of gas, quivers with motion. It is never at rest. It is never quiescent. It is the seat of an energy which is eternal; and apart from that energy it has no existence at all.

We use for convenience, he says, the terms Matter and Spirit, but we know no more what the one is than the other. We find indwelling in both of them an eternal energy or force, changing its forms, its direction, perpetually. But that energy itself eludes all our definitions. It is convenient to speak of the seat of it as Matter, he seems to say. But if any prefer to speak of it as Spirit, it is the same. We can form no ultimate notion of what it is. We only know the three things Matter, Motion, and Energy. We can trace everywhere, from the making

of a star to the development of a nation, the play of these three in relation to each other. But that is the ultimate analysis. Behind it we cannot go. 'Those,' says Mr. Macpherson, 'who choose to identify Spencerism with Materialism are simply blinding themselves with a dust-cloud of their own raising.'

Force itself may be regarded as the ultimate thing known to us. Matter is the seat of its action. Motion is the method of its action. It is itself the agent shaping and carrying on the whole, vast, universal story of Evolution. The permanence, the persistence of force is the fundamental fact and law of things. If we are asked for an account of the fundamental law of all the worlds, we can only say it is the persistence of force through all conceivable changes as the agent of every phenomenon in the known universe.

But the only force immediately known to us, and the only force of which we can form a definite conception, is our own force in some act of will putting into motion our own muscles. The forces outside of us we only believe in by inference. And the forces in

ourselves are not persistent or permanent, but fragmentary, inconstant, and abrupt. Therefore we can know nothing directly of force which is persistent. We are obliged to recognize it. We cannot know it. The word ' force ' then is to us a mere symbol, not the permanent Reality. It is our imperfect symbol for that ' Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed ' ; but that Infinite and Eternal Energy we can never directly know. Its nature is wholly hidden from us. It is ' an Inscrutable Existence everywhere manifested, to which we can neither find nor conceive beginning or end. ' In one word, though it is certain that it exists and is the source of all existence, it is to us, and ever must be to us, the absolutely ' Unknowable. '

Does then Spencer directly repudiate and reject Theism ?

In an early passage of ' First Principles, ' he distinctly and emphatically repudiates and rejects, not only Theism, but Atheism and Pantheism no less. Atheism he defines as the theory that the Universe is self-existent,

Pantheism as the theory that the Universe is self-created, and Theism as the theory that the Universe is created by external agency. None of these theories, he insists, is really a solution of the origin or explanation of the existence of the Universe, nor is any one of them really thinkable. It is only by a confusion of thought that any one even thinks that he believes them. Not one of them all is really conceivable by the human mind.

The 'Unknowable,' 'the Eternal and Infinite Energy whence all things proceed,' according to Spencer, cannot be a Person, because personality implies limitations, nor have intelligence or will, because these imply something outside to be apprehended or overcome. Yet are there expressions in his later writings which seem to modify these absolute negations, as when he speaks of the Infinite and Eternal Energy as being probably the same power that 'in ourselves wells up under the form of consciousness.'

Herbert Spencer, to sum up, is a teacher whose main purpose is to show the actual processes in the Universe without reference

to their first origin. He exhibits the world as it is, and demonstrates a single method of evolution covering its history from the remotest past ; and he predicts whither the like method must carry it in the future. When asked to do more than this, and to say how the Universe came to be, he replies that he can do no more than trace it to an Infinite and Eternal Energy, in itself Inscrutable and 'Unknowable,' and that the theories of the Atheist, the Pantheist, and the Theist, are alike to him unmeaning. Herbert Spencer has marvellously illuminated the processes of the Universe. Concerning its first origin he has nothing to tell us ; nor does he believe that anything can be told. But the human mind perpetually returns to this question of its origin ; and it cannot rest in the negative conclusions of the Spencerian philosophy.

We turn then to a writer who shows himself amongst the most competent and enthusiastic disciples of the Apostle of Evolution, one who regards him with a reverence and gratitude without limit, yet by the touch of his own luminous intelligence and devoutness

of spirit, draws from him the elements of a spiritual religion, a practical and rational Theism, which Spencer himself nowhere enunciates. Our review of John Fiske's handling of Herbert Spencer and of Evolution must be bald and brief in the extreme. I therefore the more emphatically recommend his lucid and captivating writings to students who shrink from ordinary works on philosophy, and especially his three little books, 'The Destiny of Man viewed in the Light of his Origin,' 'The Idea of God,' and 'Through Nature to God,' books which may be read again and again with ever-increasing instruction and delight.

Professor John Fiske of Harvard died in 1901. He was as distinguished as an American historian as he was as a philosopher. His supreme service in philosophy is the demonstration that the doctrine of Evolution subserves the ends of spiritual religion.

Fiske at the outset of his argument makes a concession which deprives Spencer's criticism of Theism of its main strength. He acknowledges, or rather he insists, that

modern science can no longer think of God as external to the Universe. Theism to him, therefore, is not, as Spencer defines it, a theory of the creation of the Universe by external agency. God is immanent in the Universe, in every vibration through interstellar space. Modern science tends, says Fiske, 'with overwhelming force towards the conception of a single First Cause, or Prime Mover, perpetually manifested.' To call this primal Energy the 'Unknowable' tends to misconception. We know it by its effects, which, I may add, is the only way in which we know any object of knowledge whatsoever, except our own consciousness. To put a materialistic interpretation on the facts of Evolution is to steer straight for insoluble difficulties. It is not true, for example, that nerve waves and brain vibrations are equivalent to states of consciousness. The consciousness is a parallel and concomitant phenomenon, not accounted for by any physical motion. Brain and nerve motion have not been measured and their equivalents found in feeling and desire. What physical

force there is in them has its equivalent in the muscular and other physical effects that supervene on their activity. 'The correlation of forces exhibits Mind as in nowise the product of Matter, but as something in its growth and manifestations outside and parallel.'

Again, if it is objected to investing the primal Power with Intelligence, Will, and Personality, that we only know these under limiting conditions, and therefore cannot conceive of them unlimited or infinite, exactly the same truth applies to Energy or Force. We only know these as manifested under limiting conditions, and can form no conception of them infinite and eternal, or without external objects against which to direct themselves. If an Infinite and Eternal Person is a contradiction, so is an Infinite and Eternal Energy. Each is a contradiction if we mean a Person or an Energy as we know these things in our own immediate experience. Neither is a contradiction if we mean Person or Energy in its essence, apart from all limitations imposed by the phenomenal world.

Then follows, in the Essay on 'the Everlasting Reality of Religion,' an argument, which is original and unique, and is drawn strictly from the doctrine of Evolution itself.

The history of man shows that he has from the beginning, since a certain rude culture was attained, believed crudely at first, less crudely as culture has advanced, in three things: first, that the Power ruling in nature is quasi-human, that is, has qualities to which the human mind is akin, such as consciousness, intelligence, will, love, summed up under the one term 'psychical;' secondly, that the human soul does not die; thirdly, that the unseen world has an ethical significance. These three beliefs, and these alone, according to Fiske, constitute a real Religion; and these three beliefs have been evolving into clearer and more definite pronouncement parallel with the culture of the human race. They have continually been more and more cleared from childish adulteration, they have reacted continually on the race, and have made humanity continually a higher and better thing.

Now the whole history of Evolution, in living things, is the history of the adjustment of organism to its real and actual environment. If a certain portion of the dermal surface has been developed into an eye, it has been in response to the real and actual fact of light external. So of the ear. No organ has ever been developed under Evolution, to be defrauded and befooled by finding no external fact corresponding to its functions of apprehension. And so the whole teaching of Evolution from first to last is that each fresh internal adjustment has been shaped to fit into and harmonize with some actually existing fact outside.

Now the growth of the religious faculty in man is a growth more significant than any mere physical sense. The development of his ethical and spiritual organs is a still grander thing than that of eye or ear. To suppose that there is no fact outside the man corresponding to the new function and the developed organ which crowns his manhood, is to suppose that all the methods of Evolution are reversed just at the highest point,

and to make the age-long growth of the soul unmeaning. The teaching of Evolution is that the fundamental religious belief of man corresponds not to fiction, but to fact,—that there is God, that there is immortality, that there is an unseen ethical world. Therefore Religion is for ever real.

Professor Fiske's argument for human immortality outside the above considerations consists rather of a demonstration that the facts of Evolution have nothing to say against it than of a positive demonstration. But his argument for the reality of a psychic God, or as he rather unfortunately phrases it a 'quasi-human' God, that is, a God in whom resides that which corresponds with what we know as consciousness, intelligence, and will, is very strong and thoroughly positive, and that on grounds of Evolution itself. In a beautiful argument he shows that from the very beginning Evolution has been steadily moving on in direct and unbroken line towards its last and highest product in civilized man, and is still necessarily and manifestly moving on towards a humanity, purer, sweeter, higher, nobler far

than the world has ever known as yet. It is true that it is only on this tiny Earth that we can decipher the whole of the vast story. But that is enough to exhibit the 'dramatic tendency' of the whole evolutionary process, and to show that it moves on all the time towards 'a mighty goal.' But a steadfast 'dramatic tendency,' unswerving movement towards 'a mighty goal' is the clearest indication of purpose it is possible for our minds to receive. Therefore 'the Infinite and Eternal Energy,' the Power working in and through all things that are, reveals itself as saturated with a Purpose. But only a Living God can set before him that which we call a Purpose. This alone is enough to prove that God is a Being to whom we ourselves are akin. When furthermore we perceive that this enduring and supreme Purpose is to evolve creatures endowed with the highest ethical and spiritual life, then the proof is absolute that, 'however the words may stumble in which we try to say it, God is in the deepest sense a moral Being.'

Herbert Spencer warns us that it is futile

for the human intellect to attack the problem of how the Universe came to be, but he exhibits with extraordinary skill the manner in which the Universe goes on from moment to moment on its way. John Fiske takes up the matter where Spencer leaves it, and while acknowledging that of the actual origination of the Universe we can have no conception, demonstrates that the Power controlling the Universe in every fibre and at every flash of time is a Living God, a Moral Being with whom we, who also have a moral nature, can enter into real and significant relations.

LECTURE III

AGNOSTICISM, SCIENTIFIC AND LITERARY :

T. H. HUXLEY AND MATTHEW ARNOLD

THE influence of Thomas Henry Huxley on English thought in the second half of the nineteenth century was a noteworthy phenomenon. Himself distinguished much more as a student of natural science than as a philosophical thinker, he nevertheless by his keen interest in certain current problems and the incisive vigour of his personality won a hearing and excited an interest in his utterances on the supreme themes of human thought which much greater thinkers wholly failed to acquire. Dr. William Benjamin Carpenter, for example, was, I suppose, as good a

biologist as Huxley, and he was certainly a much deeper philosophical thinker. Yet not one Englishman read Carpenter to a hundred that read Huxley; and his most lucid and illuminating essays on the relations of evolution and religion are practically unknown. But Huxley had qualities by which he penetrated and gripped the mind of the reading public, smartness, pungency, and above all an inspiring hatred of shams and passion for truth in the mouth, in the pen, in the heart. And so he prevailed, and became one of the great shapers of the minds of his educated countrymen, one who counts, and counts heavily, when we come to sum up the intellectual influences of the age.

His most telling work was done in the days when two things were proceeding in England. The whole tremendous message of Darwinism and of Evolution generally had challenged and arrested English thought and was being vehemently resisted by all the legions of tradition. And at closer quarters still traditional Christianity was assailed by an army of critics with new views of the

literary problems surrounding the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures. In both these regions men's minds were in a ferment. Huxley strode on to the arena as a giant to insist on clear thinking and honest statement, to explain in the most nervous English exactly what Darwinism and the great massive Spencerian doctrine of Evolution really meant, and with merciless logic to transfix all clerics who put forth hazy and conventional platitudes by way of food for the people. And the brilliant merciless champion got a mighty following. No man more detested hazy thinking than he. Yet probably no man ever had a vaster army of hazy thinkers who thought themselves his followers. And his own coined and patented appellation, 'Agnostic,' was worn as a badge by myriads who had never done a hard hour's thinking in their lives, but used it for a cover for sheer intellectual laziness and contented letting alone of the most stimulating and urgent questions that can occupy the mind of man.

The story of how he introduced the words 'Agnostic' and 'Agnosticism' into the lan-

guage is known well enough. He became a member of the Metaphysical Society, at whose meetings men of varied schools eminent in the theological, the philosophical, the literary, and the scientific worlds, discussed the very fundamentals of human thought and knowledge, Churchmen and Catholics, Orthodox and Broad, men of affirmative faith and men whose whole intellectual life was one vast interrogation, Archbishop Thomson and Cardinal Manning, F. D. Maurice and James Martineau, Tennyson and Ruskin, Mr. Gladstone and the Duke of Argyll, Professor Clifford and Frederic Harrison, John Morley and Leslie Stephen, John Tyndall and Huxley himself, ever shrewd and alert, formed indeed a goodly company, and must have held discourse fit entertainment for the gods. But Huxley found that almost all of them were '*ists*' of some group or other. Every man stood for some profession of belief on unseen things. He, Huxley, stood for none. He was like a fox without a tail. So he invented for himself the title of 'agnostic.' He remembered how in the early

days of the Church, the schools of the Gnostics were so called because they professed to know just the things which he himself was quite sure that he did not know. So he put the negative prefix to the word, and called himself 'Agnostic' precisely because he did not know or think he knew nor even hope that he ever should know these things; a proclamation that he, unlike the rest, Christian or Materialist, in no way supposed himself to 'have solved the problem of existence.' 'So,' says he, 'I took the earliest opportunity of parading it at our Society, to show that I, too, had a tail, like the other foxes.' The term took and with extraordinary rapidity penetrated the English language.

That it did so is not difficult to explain. The terms 'Atheist,' 'Secularist,' and 'Free Thinker' were already widely current. The Free Thinker, so far as his appellation went, was as little committed to any positive doctrine as Huxley himself. The Secularist professed at any rate to put all the stress on the practical problems of life rather than on

abstract speculations. The Atheist had, indeed, generally been supposed definitely to deny the existence of God, but the most powerful professor of atheism in England, Mr. Bradlaugh, always maintained that the term carried, not the denial of God, but only the view that, whether there was a God or not, he was of no practical concern to man. But all these three terms bore a certain social stigma. They were the badges of groups among the labouring classes, and did not suggest cultured refinement, or delicate philosophic balance. I do not say that the depreciatory associations clustering round the names were deserved; but they were there. And so an atheism, a putting away of God, a relegation of him into the place of an insoluble interrogation, which was to travel with a first-class ticket and put on a dress-coat of an evening, and be on polite terms with Bishops and with Dukes, accepted with avidity a new title which was without suggestion of the secularist hall.

In a passage that has become classical Professor Huxley defines the agnostic prin-

ciple as he holds it. The principle is 'that it is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty.' Having laid down the principle he adds, 'This is what Agnosticism asserts; and, in my opinion, it is all that is essential to Agnosticism. That which Agnostics deny and repudiate, as immoral, is the contrary doctrine, that there are propositions which men ought to believe, without logically satisfactory evidence; and that reprobation ought to attach to the profession of disbelief in such inadequately supported propositions.' (*Controverted Questions*, p. 450).

It will be seen then that the fundamental principle of Huxley's Agnosticism is ethical, not intellectual. It is an asseveration, not that a certain doctrine is true, but that a certain practice is immoral,—the practice, namely, of saying that one is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless one can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty. This fact is highly significant. It

points to the correlative fact that Huxley's moral nature was much more keen, perspicuous, and persistent than his intellectual.

But now let us try to estimate exactly what this moral protest means. With the general motive of the protest we shall be in lively sympathy. It is in the highest degree demoralizing to allege either to yourself or to others pretended certainties which are not real and legitimate certainties in your mind. It is immensely demoralizing: it is also inordinately common. But what, according to Huxley, are the grounds which alone do justify a man in declaring himself certain of any proposition?

He must be able to 'produce evidence which logically justifies' his certainty.

Let us take some quite trivial proposition of which I have unguardedly announced my certainty.

'Mr. Smith called on me yesterday afternoon.' 'Indeed you must be mistaken,' says some one, 'for I am told that Mr. Smith was in London yesterday afternoon.' Well, then, I must either 'produce evidence' or confess

that I have done wrong. But it may be that I cannot produce evidence. I opened the door to him myself. No one else was in the house at the time. He brought nothing into the house and took nothing from it. He himself is really gone to London to-day and cannot be called as a witness. Crestfallen and ashamed, I ought to acknowledge my grievous fault. But, lo! in spite of Huxley's code of ethics I am just as certain that Mr. Smith called on me yesterday afternoon as I was before; and I reiterate my certainty with undiminished self-assurance.

But I must not only adduce *evidence* for my certainty, but I must—according to the agnostic rule—adduce evidence which logically justifies my certainty. But here another difficulty at once starts up. Every logical process consists of reasoning from something that is assumed. If you assume nothing, you cannot begin the logical process. But, according to the rule, I must not say that I am certain of anything at all—that is, I must not assume anything whatever—until I have built up that assumption itself on evidence

logically leading up to it. By that rule there is a morass at the foundation of every conceivable structure of reason. And if you try to drive your foundations to solid ground below, you come upon nothing but more morass down and down for ever. The principle of agnosticism, as so deliberately and carefully stated by the author of the term, makes it immoral not only to say that you are certain of any proposition concerning God, immortality, or the unseen, but no less immoral to say that you are certain of any proposition concerning the facts of physiology or physics, evolution or the laws of nature, since every such proposition assumes such unproved and logically unprovable assumptions as the trustworthiness of our physical senses, the veracity of human memory, and the reality of the external world. All these things I most conscientiously believe, for I have never laid it down that it is wrong to be certain of that for which I cannot adduce evidence which logically justifies my certainty. But were I committed to that doctrine, so imperiously urged on us by Huxley, I should

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necessarily live in a universal quagmire of nescience, and should be cut off from every statement of conviction whatsoever, from a declaration of belief in Almighty God down to an assertion that there is a cloudy sky.

What then are we to say? What *does* justify a man in saying, 'I am certain'?

All conviction attaining that degree of strength which we understand by 'certainty,' is in reality simply a sense of overwhelming probability. All our judgments, as well in the most trivial as in the sublimest sphere, are an appraising of the probabilities. The practical experience of life is a perpetual training in deciding what degree of probability, or cumulation of probabilities, warrants us in taking it as practically certain that such and such particular beliefs are true. And not one of us can take a single step in life without acting on innumerable convictions which if built on evidence at all, are built on evidence resting at the bottom on sheer and absolute assumption.

Now Huxley's whole purpose and endeavour, his whole moral and intellectual zeal,

was to bar men off from professing a certainty in the unseen sphere which he and every one else freely admits in the sphere of the visible. But there lay a fallacy at the basis of his whole contention, and it was this. He assumed that there is no direct and immediate experience in spiritual matters, parallel to the direct and immediate experience in things visible, which common sense accepts as not in itself requiring logical proof, but as the legitimate groundwork on which to found structures of reason. The theologians, whom he so dearly loved to bait, gave him every excuse for his assault. They cumbered themselves with all sorts of literary, critical, and historical assumptions that crumbled to dust under the smiting strokes of reason. Had they been content to stand rigidly for the veracity of the primary experiences of the spiritual life, and a religion based thereon, they would have had a cause as impregnable as he himself had when he based himself on the primary facts of physics.

The real moral law, then, which the author of agnosticism would have been justified in

laying down was simply this:—that it is wrong for a man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he finds that certainty on reasoning based on such primary assumptions as are legitimate in the sphere in which the proposition lies,—and that law applies with equal force to propositions in the realm of the visible and to propositions in the realm of the unseen.

And indeed Professor Huxley himself conspicuously fails—as every human being must inevitably fail—to observe his own agnostic rule.

A single example will suffice to establish this statement. In a most noble letter, showing his heroic attitude in overwhelming sorrow, and written in response to the well-meant suggestions of comfort sent to him by Canon Kingsley, he declares: ‘I have the firmest belief that the Divine Government (if we may use such a phrase) is wholly just.’ ‘The absolute justice of the system of things is as clear to me as any scientific fact.’ ‘The ledger of the Almighty is strictly kept, and every one of us has the balance of

his operations paid over to him at the end of every minute of his existence.' (*Life and Letters*, I, p. 219).

My whole heart goes out in homage to the man who in the very crisis of his grief could summon to his aid so magnificent a faith as that. But none the less, if we are to look at its enunciation in the light of his own agnostic formula, we are compelled to say that no theologian Catholic or Protestant has ever more daringly defied his ruling. Few are the Christian men who would dare to make these declarations in the fullness of their unqualified universality. But the point is that the certainty thus proclaimed is of a nature which makes it a sheer impossibility to 'produce evidence which logically justifies it.' How is Huxley going to disprove the many allegations of injustice in the drift of things which perpetually meet us, and not seldom perhaps gnaw at our own hearts? How is he going to show the scale between receipts and deserts? How is he going to collect a sufficient number of lives in the history of mankind and a sufficient number of

minutes in those lives to justify the tremendous induction that each man gets the balance of his deserts at every minute of his life? The assurance is not based on any induction whatever, but is a splendid deduction from a universal law which Huxley finds inscribed prior to all process of reasoning on the native tablets of his mind. The 'absolute justice of the system of things' declares itself automatically in his consciousness, and not by production of evidence logically justifying the conviction. Such evidence is inconceivable and impossible. The conviction springs direct from the virile constitution of his moral nature.

It is as impossible to justify this conviction, rooted in his mind, by logical evidence, as to justify my belief in God, or in the reality of prayer, without some assumption *ab initio*. His assurance was simply the unreasoned deliverance of a clean conscience and a healthy physique. In other words it is as sheer an act of faith as the prophet's unreasoned conviction of the righteousness of God or the evangelist's assurance of the perfection of heavenly love.

We have but scanty time in which to turn to other leading features of that Huxleyan teaching which so widely and powerfully influenced the English mind in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Huxley was perhaps the most potent and effective missionary of the doctrine of evolution which in his own department Darwin, and in all departments Spencer, had wrought up to a condition for assimilation by the general mind of the age. But there is nevertheless an uneasiness now and again in his exposition of evolution by speech and pen. He warns us very emphatically that evolution is not a speculation, but a generalization only. It is for him only a statement of a vast mass of individual facts bound up into an harmonious whole. And yet in truth the doctrine of evolution is not only a volume of facts ; it is also a way of accounting for facts. As it has laid hold of the understanding of the age, it is not a statement of isolated facts alone, but also a theory of the inter-connection of those facts. And Huxley is often betrayed into showing his consciousness that it is a

theory of causal connection between successive phenomena.

Thus it is that Huxley pits evolution and particular creation against each other, as if to say that successive forms of life are evolved from preceding forms were necessarily to put out of court an act of creative power in the production of each particular being. But if evolution really were to him only a generalization and not a theory of origin, he would see that it is quite conceivable that the creative power is applied to every birth in all the biological range, and that that which we call evolution is only the observed method and order by which the creative energy proceeds.

But perhaps an equally questionable principle of the great biologist in his survey of human thought is shown in his insistence that there has been a steady retreat of the belief in all that is regarded as supernatural before the advance of purely natural science. 'The historical evolution of humanity,' says he, 'has been, and is being, accompanied by a co-ordinate elimination of the supernatural

from its original large occupation of men's thoughts. The question—How far is this process to go?—is, in my apprehension, *The Controverted Question of our time.*' (*Controverted Questions*, p. 7).

Now I venture to believe that that is not the issue lying before the civilized mind of man. There is no true antagonism whatsoever between the two modes of contemplating the sum of the things that are. Natural science is right in claiming for its own the whole realm of phenomena. There is no province of phenomena from which she is ever to be barred. Her sublime task is to show the whole order of the universe,—to trace its history, its relations, all the endless intricacy and order of its evolution. The supernatural is never to try to stop the way. But on the other hand this natural science stands everywhere paralysed and helpless before the importunate question, who or what is the initial, operative Power from which flow forth the energies working in every region of the natural realm. To that question natural science has not a word to answer.

Huxley suggests that it is not given to the mind of man to find an answer. Yet from the first till now the human mind has been eager for an answer, has at heart cared more for that than even for the most wonderful demonstrations of natural science, and would rifle the universe for the solution. Who or what supplies the initial, the operative power needed to fulfil every single process of evolution from the propulsion of the primaeval nebulae to the bifurcation of a generative cell? That too is a legitimate question for the thinking mind; and it is one which, whatever be the answer, every generation of men has asked, and which will still be asked as eagerly as it is to-day when all the charts of all the stars have been laid down and the minutest secrets of germ-life have been set forth on lantern-slides.

When finally we come to appraise the place of Huxley in the history of English thought in the nineteenth century, I think we must give up any contention that he had any very keen or conspicuous philosophic insight. He was an honest man, who knew well what

he knew, who hated every kind of cant and humbug, who detested all thinking adulterated by bias of profession or of class, who loved precision and distinctness, and would have every man to know what he knew to be true, and what he knew to be false, and what he neither knew to be true nor knew to be false. He was a scourge not only to intellectual haziness and intellectual laziness, but to all that practice of reserve, of economy, of accommodation, of non-natural interpretation, which is bred by authoritative creeds and ecclesiastical control, to which thousands of Anglican clergy are wholly given over, and which is the despair of all men who hold plain honesty, veracity, and directness of thought and speech to be vital elements of national morality. Not by the smartness of his controversial practice, will he live far on in the records of famous men, but by the intensity of his honesty, the splendour of his courage, and the virility with which he held a faith in the eternal justice, not justified by his theory of knowledge, but wrought of his own inherent nobility of moral nature.

Note by Philip H. Wicksteed

THE second half of this lecture, as delivered, was devoted to MATTHEW ARNOLD. The plan of treatment was laid down on the broad and effective lines that characterize the rest of this work, but from a variety of causes that need not be enumerated here the execution hardly rose to the level of the conception. It fell largely into verbal criticism; and Mr. Armstrong himself after twice delivering the lecture and testing the impression that this portion of it produced on his hearers was confirmed in his own dissatisfaction with it; and feeling that it was not on the same plane as the rest of the scheme into which it was worked, he had determined to re-write it completely. He was prevented by death from taking any direct steps towards carrying out this intention.

Under these circumstances it has been felt that some injustice would be done both to the subject and the author by the reproduction of the lecture as it stands in Mr. Armstrong's manuscript; and materials on which to base the reconstruction which he contemplated are lacking. At the same time some treatment of Matthew Arnold was an essential part of the author's scheme and it has therefore been determined to submit to the reader a sketch of the plan on which this portion of the work was conceived, together with a few extracts from the manuscript, and to leave the details undeveloped.

After asking his readers not to forget the 'profound, if melancholy, religious feeling' which characterizes Arnold's poems, and which should qualify the judgments we base upon his prose essays, Mr. Armstrong goes on to contrast his literary agnosticism with Huxley's scientific agnosticism. The former was fostered 'not by the results or preoccupations of physical science, but rather by a sensitive—even fastidious—distaste for inflated theological pronouncements. . . . Huxley's interest lay in the study of law, Arnold's in the study of letters. Accordingly the subject matter of his essays was not, like Huxley's, physical nature, but the literature of religion, and supremely the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. These Huxley handled mainly to show how insecure a basis they are for supernatural belief, Arnold to extract their fundamental ethical and spiritual truth from the superincumbent mass of misinterpretation.'

Pointing out Arnold's habit of condensing his teaching in 'a limited number of incisive phrases, which he employs with constant reiteration, and which are packed with concentrated meaning as he expounds them,' Mr. Armstrong proposes to take a few of these phrases and submit them to such tests as these: Are they adequate summaries of the historical or literary facts of which they profess to give an account? Do they cover the

area of the religious experiences which they profess to satisfy? Are they inherently cogent and lucid?

Thus he takes Matthew Arnold's declaration that Israel's fundamental religious belief was belief in 'the enduring power' or 'the Eternal, not ourselves,' which 'makes for righteousness,' and maintains that whereas this account of the religion of Israel is 'most accurate and faithful as far as it goes,' yet it leaves out as unessential, something that lay at the very heart of Israel's consciousness. To declare as Matthew Arnold does that Israel, having no turn for metaphysics, never raised such a metaphysical question as the personality of God at all, is, Mr. Armstrong holds, radically to misconceive the sense of a living God which pervades the Old Testament, and to make Israel, *because he was not metaphysical*, substitute a metaphysical idea for a living personal experience.

Again, akin to this formula is Arnold's celebrated attempt to give a 'scientific definition of God' as 'the stream of tendency by which all things seek to fulfil the law of their being.' But this definition does not meet the requirements of Mr. Arnold's own religious life, for he 'himself seems abundantly to recognize thankfulness and reverence as a right attitude of man towards God. Yet thankfulness and reverence, are inconceivable

motions of the soul towards any but a conscious being.' -

Further criticisms of this definition on the score of ambiguity and vagueness follow.

Other phrases of Mr. Arnold's, such as his definition of religion as 'morality touched by emotion,' or his pronouncement that 'conduct is the 'object of religion,' and is itself 'three-fourths of life,' are submitted to a severe examination, with the result that we are 'constrained to assign to the great literary agnostic apologist, for all his charm and skilful persuasiveness, but a comparatively lowly place as a scientific religious thinker.' The lecturer concludes with the words :—

'Yet before parting with one of the most interesting and fascinating personalities of the England of the nineteenth century, though in his prose writings certainly also one of the most provoking, let us remind ourselves how his poetic utterance often touched deeper and more moving thoughts than his critical essays usually reached, by citing those noble and penetrating stanzas in which he recognized the worth and sanctity of all real, religion which the world has ever known' :—

Children of men ! the unseen Power, whose eye
For ever doth accompany mankind,
Hath look'd on no religion scornfully
That men did ever find.

Which has not taught weak wills how much they
can ?

Which has not fall'n on the dry heart like rain ?

Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man :

Thou must be born again !

Children of men ! not that your age excel

In pride of life the ages of your sires,

But that ye think clear, feel deep, bear fruit well,

The Friend of man desires.

LECTURE IV

MATERIALISM AND ATHEISM :

JOHN TYNDALL AND CHARLES BRADLAUGH

WE have reviewed and endeavoured to estimate the places of Professor Huxley and Matthew Arnold among the leaders of thought in the England of the latter part of the nineteenth century. We now turn to another name which was constantly linked with that of Huxley in the popular mind. John Tyndall, with Darwin and Hooker, was of the innermost circle of Huxley's friends. Huxley and Tyndall were colleagues in the high task of expounding the methods and conclusions of science to the mind of average England; but though

there was broad coincidence in their principles and opinions, the two men were of widely dissimilar type. Huxley was combative, a smiter of every intellectual sham, a born gladiator, with little or no sympathy with the yearning for religious affirmation so deeply rooted in the breast of man. Tyndall, on the contrary, was naturally of a mystic nature; and strong as his negations were, they seemed to be wrung out of him by his intellect, and in themselves to yield him no pleasure. He was full of poetic sensibility, and his accounts of the operations of nature always ran into the artistic and poetic mould. As pure literature many a paragraph even in his most controversial addresses stands on a level with the utterances of the sworn knights of the imagination, glowing with the lofty emotions of reverence and awe.

But it was as a combatant in the great battle for ever being waged on the fundamental problems of human thought that he won his widest fame; and from first to last it was as the avowed champion of *materialism* that he stood before the world, though he

gave to that philosophy many a turn which its most illustrious apostles would not willingly have avowed.

His large knowledge, his powers of clear exposition, and above all the charm of his style gave him in his day an extraordinary hold on the attention of the people.

His philosophical position will be best gathered from his Essay on Scientific Materialism, the famous Belfast Address and its subsequent enlargements, and the Essay on Science and Man, together with other productions, gathered together in the second volume of his *Fragments of Science*.

The Belfast Address, delivered from the presidential chair of the British Association, in 1874, made a stir in the theological and philosophical worlds which few occasional utterances on however conspicuous an arena have aroused. Let us try to state as plainly as may be its most important contentions.

The earlier portions of this celebrated deliverance comprised a review of the whole broad path of science from the days of early Greek speculation to contemporary discovery,

—a review brilliant in exposition and opulent in knowledge. And it traced the scientific conception of the universe from the atomic speculations of Democritus and Empedocles, right down to the pregnant inductions of Spencer and of Darwin. Broadly it presented the physical universe as an infinitude of atoms,—particles of inconceivable minuteness in everlasting flux. All objects in the inorganic and the organic worlds were congeries of atoms in innumerable and perpetually changing combinations. They were in ceaseless motion among themselves; and there was no breach of continuity from the first motions within the formless void prior to all suns and stars to the growth of all the multitudinous wealth of the vegetable and animal kingdoms of to-day. There was nothing now in crystal, in plant, in brute, in man himself, which was not implicitly there in the beginning of beginnings in the *primaeval* molecules of matter. Within its own bosom matter carried all the forces which displayed themselves as heat, as electricity, as magnetism, as mechanical energy, each form

passing freely into all other forms. The thrills of nerve and of brain, with their subtle mystery of power, were one with the force which drew the iron filing to the needle or emitted the electric spark from the amber. And so in the long sweep of his thought the great expositor saw in that Matter, too often he complains, covered with opprobrium, 'the promise and potency of all terrestrial life,' (*Fragments of Science*, II, p. 191), or, as he afterwards restated it, 'the promise and potency of every form and quality of life.' (*Fragments of Science*, II, p. 208).

That phrase, 'the promise and potency of every form and quality of life,' became the centre of the battle. In Matter, and in Matter only, 'the promise and potency of life,' that was the flag around which the scientific army rallied; to drag down that flag became the supreme struggle of the theologians in all their regiments and companies. Hot and fierce was the fight with thrust and parry. Let us as we wander over the battle-field from which the smoke has rolled away try to understand exactly what

was, or seemed to be, involved in the contention.

According to the teaching of this Address it would seem that force cannot be separated from matter. All the protean forms of force are wrapt up in the solid body of the matter which constitutes the world. Once set the *primaeval* atoms in motion and all the forms of force, both those which weld stars and planets and those which thrill through the nerve from ear or eye to brain, are there ready to play their part. Never from the very beginning of the physical universe down to the play of the tongue of Tyndall on the air whose pulsations carried his voice through the Ulster Hall, has any new thing been added from outside. The whole sum of matter and its motions is exactly equivalent to that which it was when the first ray of light quivered across the reaches of space. Matter and force are never severed. They are known only in conjunction. They are the objects of continuous observation. Each is, as it were, a permanent aspect of the other.

Now it is true, Tyndall would admit, that

in the primitive world-stuff and its atoms there is no sign or suggestion of what we call consciousness, of that mysterious phenomenon to which we give the name of thought. Indeed the vast evolution has proceeded far before sign of its cryptic entrance. The crystal has motions closely parallel to those of life, but there is no hint of consciousness within. Nay, even the oak or the rose gives no witness that it thinks, or knows, or loves. And as we pass to the animal kingdom, though there comes a time when we are irresistibly persuaded that thought or feeling are going on, there is no new thing which microscope can detect, no betrayal of the entrance of any new power from outside, only rather subtler and more refined motions of molecules in spinal cord or in the grey matter of the brain.

Now all this mighty panorama of the universe Tyndall makes no pretence to explain in the ordinary sense of the word 'explanation.' Science simply records that so it has been, that so it is. Such are the phenomena of the universe, such is their

history and genealogy. Science only gives an 'explanation' in the sense in which to say that the falling of an apple from a tree is an example of the force of gravity, is an explanation. She cannot tell you whence comes the *power* which manifests itself in gravitation. Tyndall gives you matter with inherent force; but he has no word to say about the origin of matter or the source of the force inherent in it. So far he is as purely agnostic as Huxley, his friend. But he does declare himself distinctly a materialist, meaning that in giving you an account of matter and its inherent force he has given you a full account of the universe. And so at the Metaphysical Society Huxley found that Tyndall wore a tail just as much as any other of the foxes.

But Tyndall frankly tells you that he cannot accommodate consciousness among his museum of material forces. It may be true that such and such a thought or emotion always accompanies such and such molecular movement in the brain; but we do not, he says, 'possess the intellectual organ' which would enable us to see the causal connection

between the two. It is not merely that we have not instruments fine enough to detect the precise molecular change which accompanies the act of reasoning or the sense of anger or of love. Were our instruments absolutely perfect, 'we should be as far as ever from the solution of the problem, "how are the physical processes connected with the facts of consciousness?"' (*Fragments of Science*, II, p. 87). This frank confession betrays, you will observe, the inevitable breach in the walls of the materialistic fortress. It appears that an account of the universe which undertakes to deduce all phenomena from the properties of matter promises more than it is able to perform. It cannot deduce consciousness, yet consciousness is an indubitable fact.

Before the problem of the mysterious transactions by which molecular motions in the material universe and finally in the sensory nerve and the brain are followed by the phenomena of consciousness, and the parallel problem of the stimulus imparted apparently by the conscious will to motor nerve and muscle and thence to the sur-

rounding world, the materialism of Tyndall stands dumb and helpless. 'It is certain,' says he, 'that I have no power of imagining states of consciousness, interposed between molecules of the brain, and influencing the transference of motion among the molecules.' Hence, he adds, 'the logic seems of iron strength' which misses out the link of consciousness in the chain of causation from the sensory nerves to the motor nerves, and takes it that the one acts directly on the other,—the logic which affirms that consciousness has nothing to do with the transaction, but is a mere *by-product* thrown off in the mechanical train of causes from nerve to brain and from brain to nerve again. (*Fragments of Science*, II, p. 222).

But with characteristic honesty Tyndall replies to himself. Even the strictest holders of automatism, he observes, do still admit that the marshalling of the molecules of the brain does actually produce the phenomenon of consciousness. Such a passage from molecular motion to consciousness is to him quite inconceivable, or, as he puts it, 'eludes

all mental presentation.' But it appears none the less to be a fact. But if that is a fact, all other action and interaction between consciousness and matter may be a fact as well. And the whole case of materialism absolutely falls to pieces, the materialism that declares that in matter is the promise and potency of all life.

Now there is one very striking characteristic of Tyndall's method on which an immense deal hinges. He continually insists that we are not justified in saying that we *believe* that which we cannot '*visualize*,' that is, make a mental picture of; a limitation of belief even more sweeping than Huxley's famous agnostic principle. We can in a certain way present to the imagination, or '*visualize*,' make imaginatively visible, the process of mechanical force changing to heat, for it is only a change in the movement of molecules. We can form a mental picture of the molecular action in the stem of a tree by which the elements of earth are transmuted into that which comes forth in foliage and in flower. We can form a mental picture of the

molecular motions by which the hammer of the piano communicates its force to the wires, and these convey their harmonies to the sounding board, and this shakes them out upon the air. But when we pass from molecules of matter to other agencies we can form no picture of them whatsoever. We can form no picture whatever of a free *human* soul presiding over the brain and sending forth the decrees of the will to fingers or the feet. We can form no picture whatever of a free *divine* soul shaping the snow crystals in their miracle of beauty as they softly fall upon the Alpine height. And therefore it is unscientific and unphilosophical, thinks Tyndall, to import such free soul or souls into our thought.

Now if we realize the demand which the Professor is here making on us, we shall perceive that, if we grant it, we shall have conceded the whole theory of the materialistic interpretation of the universe. He does well indeed to insist on our making the effort to define our thoughts clearly and sharply like a picture or an image. It is a wonderful

safeguard against loose reasoning and slipshod conclusions. But by the very nature of things this *picturing* faculty can be applied to the purely material and the purely material alone. If there *be* an element in the world which is *not* material, that element is necessarily shut out from this kind of mental presentation. If there *be* a human self which is other than the body, if there *be* a divine Self which is *other* than matter, whether it be the slave or the Lord of matter, it is *ipso facto* shut out from the recognition of this philosophy.

Yet the candour of Professor Tyndall compels him to admit that there *is* such a non-material element. He recognizes *consciousness* as a fact, though he cannot deduce it from matter, or find any place for it among the phenomena in the material chain. It is there, imponderable, immeasurable, most inconvenient, but quite undeniable. Consciousness *is*, as surely as heat and electricity *are*. It has to be acknowledged. And the only question left is whether it be a mere casual succession of by-products of molecular phy-

sics, and without cohesion or continuity or meaning, or whether it be itself a phenomenon of an entity continuous and self-contained, which is not matter, with an existence of its own as real as that of planets or of moons. The materialist presses the former solution,—that consciousness is a mere by-product. The idealist or the realist—you may call him which you will—declares, on the contrary, that both in man, a child of nature, and in God, Creator and Master of nature,—consciousness has its roots and ground in a real and substantive being, and not in any mere by-product whatever.

Tyndall traces the marvellous movement of physical forces up to the sensory nerves of man and then to the brain, the very threshold of consciousness; and he traces again the issue of impulse from the brain right along the motor nerves and so out into the outer world. That is all that the physicist as such can find. But he imagines some one to put to him the question whether this machinery of nerve and brain must not be the instrument of a deeper self within and behind

the molecular self. 'Where is the *man*?' he fancies some one asking. 'Who or what is it that sends those messages through the bodily organism?' 'Must you not admit a *free human* soul at the heart of all the mechanism?'

But he answers, No. 'Try mentally to visualize this soul as an entity distinct from the body,' and you cannot do it. Therefore he holds it unscientific to believe in it, an argument which, as we have seen, begs the question; for if the soul is not matter, it follows that you cannot visualize it. And again he declares that to explain the case by the hypothesis of a soul, is an offence against the scientific rule which lays it down that an explanation requires that the unknown must be explained in terms of the known, whereas nerves and brain are known, but the soul belongs to the realm of the unknown.

But here again surely is a momentous case of begging the question, and of false and illusory reasoning. For however clearly we fancy that we know *matter*, we certainly know *soul* more intimately still. Our belief

in matter is derived by pure inference from the experience of the senses; whereas the belief in our own conscious being is absolutely primary, and can never for one moment be escaped. Of all known things that the human mind can contemplate, soul, or a conscious continuous entity, is absolutely the first and surest. Of matter our knowledge is mediate; of soul, our knowledge is immediate.

But I would venture to go further. I would turn round the argument upon Professor Tyndall himself. He bids us to believe in matter and its processes because we can visualize it, make a mental picture of it, whereas no man can make a mental picture of soul or Spirit or the unseen inward self. And he finds resident and inherent in the matter which he visualizes that which he calls force, revealing itself now as heat, now as magnetism, now as electricity, each form displaying itself in its own set of molecular motions. And it is true that I can imagine such motions minute and marvellous within the iron bar or the stem of the tree or the

ether that pulses between earth and sun. Yes, I can visualize the *movements*; but can I visualize the *force*? Suppose I had the most perfect scientific instruments; suppose I could see every thrill and throb within the metal, the timber, the very gases of the air. Suppose I could draw them, make diagrams or models of them, measure them. What after all would it be that I should see? Just successive arrangements of atoms, motions, and movements of physical bodies, subtle, swift, microscopic. But I should not so much as begin to see *force*,—not a trace of its figure, not a vestige of its garment. *Force* is a conception entirely supplied by the observing mind. The mind observes the movements, the play of molecule upon molecule; and, by an innate law of its constitution, it says, ‘behind these movements there must be force, some efficient cause which makes them, some power initiating and maintaining them.’ But there is not the instrument which can exhibit, nor is there the organ nor the vestige of the organ in the mind which can conceive, the actual force

itself behind the molecules and the motions. This force is simply an inference of the mind, an inference unescapable, inevitable, incontrovertible, but for all that only an inference from the facts observed, and not itself capable of being made the object of direct observation.

No, there lives not the man who can 'visualize' the force or forces whose play in the whole history and structure of nature we are nevertheless compelled to assume. We see their effects. We trace their action. But they themselves wear an impenetrable veil. Can we then, apart from visualizing, apart from drawing a mental picture, form any intellectual idea of them? We mean *something* when we speak of force. We do *not* mean a thing visible or which we can even conceive of as visible. What then do we mean?

Well, there is a certain universal experience of man which offers a clue. Suppose we search not in the attributes of matter, but in that self, that soul, which we know by immediate knowledge, though Tyndall treats

it as a very dubitable business. There is a certain class of experience in my life-history which seems to offer me a hint. I myself am able to produce motions in the world of matter. I can strike a nail with a hammer, or throw a ball, or lift a book. I do so, it is true, by the *instrumentality* of brain and nerve and muscle, all material things. But I am conscious of initiating the thing by an act of myself, of the entity which is me,—by an act of that which I call my will. I cannot explain will; but I know that in my case will can initiate molecular movements in matter. Is it not reasonable to suppose that in the great field of nature there is a power at work through all things, akin to this initiatory power which I know in myself as will? If that be so, we have a supreme and all-embracing harmony in the universe,—a universal formula, summing up all science and philosophy. If that is not so, we have a universe without a key. Materialism has no answer to the riddle. All life is one vast unanswered interrogation, and there is no possibility of discovering an answer.

In one place Professor Tyndall seems badly to lose his footing on the giddy path and to forget his own definitions of the 'matter' to which he would limit our knowledge. 'Matter,' says he, in his reply to the searching criticisms of Dr. Martineau, 'I define as that mysterious thing by which all this is accomplished,' namely the growth of the babe from the germ. (*Fragments of Science*, II, p. 249). But if matter be thus defined as that by which the processes of nature are brought about, then we are materialists every one. The materialist has conquered by complete and absolute surrender. He means by matter something which no one has ever meant by it before. He no longer means mere atoms and molecules, but also that mysterious power above the atoms and the molecules to which religious language gives the name of God. He means by it, after all, that which we assuredly cannot visualize.

And indeed Dr. Martineau's main criticism is absolutely just. You can only be a materialist if you put into matter at the

beginning all you desire to draw out of it at the end. If you choose so to define matter as to include in it motion and force and power and consciousness and will, then indeed you can triumphantly demonstrate that your universe is matter and nothing more. But in so doing you rob language of its meaning. And yet, unless you do so define it, you must sooner or later recognize a living and conscious power controlling matter, to which religious men give the great name of God.

Finally, observe that this great scientist, insistent as he was against what he deemed the false claims of the theologians, was in temperament profoundly religious. Few writers have betrayed deeper awe or a lowlier reverence in the face of the great mysteries of nature. None have displayed a keener sensitiveness to the spiritual influence of sea and mountain and glory of sunset skies.

Again and again he concedes to the religious emotions their right to play a great rôle in the life of man. But he bids us to regard their affirmations and intuitions as

belonging to the realm of poetry, outside the lawful limits of science or of knowledge. To which the reply of the religious man must ever be distinct and straight. The religious emotions are built up on the conviction of the reality of spiritual fact. Without that conviction they fade into unsubstantial air. They cannot subsist as a dream of the fancy or nurture themselves on confessed delusion. If God be not in the universe, and we know that he is not, no health can come by nursing emotions based on the conviction that he is. In the interest of religion and religious emotion as a permanent element of human life it is necessary to fight for the position that God *can be known* and that he is a legitimate inference from all that we can learn of the universe in which we live. Some of us believe that the philosophy which declares the reality of God and of the human soul as the surest of all sure knowledge is the only one in which either true religion or true science can permanently live. In that philosophy, which ever grows clearer with the years, we hope that we may live and die.

I have coupled for convenience sake, the name of Charles Bradlaugh with that of Professor Tyndall in the present lecture. There may be some who will question whether the famous Iconoclast was a thinker of such calibre as to have a claim to be considered among such a group of thinkers as Wordsworth and Mill, Darwin and Spencer, Huxley and Tyndall. Nor do I myself esteem him as of very great account purely as a thinker. But then neither do I so account Huxley or Matthew Arnold. In the sixties and the seventies Bradlaugh's forceful personality and his fearless vindication of his views enabled him to impress his beliefs and disbeliefs on tens of thousands of his countrymen to whom Wordsworth was as one whistling to the winds, to whom the mind of Spencer was a closed book, and whose interest even the great twin scientists, Huxley and Tyndall, failed strongly to engage. Mr. Bradlaugh was the guide and teacher of large sections of the most intelligent members of the working classes. Such towns as Manchester and Birmingham, Newcastle and Nottingham, Leicester and

Northampton, rang with his fame, and everywhere vast audiences flocked to hear him, drawn by the virile power of his oratory, the indignation and scorn which flamed up in him in the face of an hypocrisy or a sham, the intense conviction with which he clung to opinions denounced by all that was of conventional repute in society and church. If on the withdrawal of his powerful personality his influence seems very largely to have decayed, nevertheless that influence was a fact which it was impossible to ignore through some decades of the second half of the nineteenth century.

Bradlaugh's interest in debate and his untiring energy in contending against every form of that which he regarded as superstitious, rested on his intense desire for the welfare of mankind, and, as a means to that end, for large measures of practical reform. The removal of superstition and the establishment of truth seemed to him the one straight road to the removal of wrong and the establishment of right. 'For him,' says Mr. John M. Robertson, 'creed was action, and action

was creed.' He did not believe that you can rouse mankind to a revision and elevation of practical life,—manners, customs, institutions,—while you leave them in the slough of superstition and the worship of idols.

What then was the intellectual teaching of this ardent champion of social and political justice? Many men have been falsely called Atheists: Mr. Bradlaugh called himself an Atheist and gloried in the name. But we must not take it that the acceptance of the label disposes of the matter. We have to ask what did the label mean. Auguste Comte regards Atheism as equivalent to the direct denial of the existence of God, and protests that his system is not atheistic. Bradlaugh on the contrary, considered the term to leave the abstract question of the existence or otherwise of God still open, however uninteresting, unmeaning, irrelevant, and insoluble. By Atheism he meant the system of thought which simply leaves the God-idea out of the reckoning. He believed that he could disprove the existence of any particular God; of God in the abstract he professed

himself without an idea. 'I have never yet heard,' he wrote to Bishop Magee, 'a definition of God from any living man, nor have I read any definition by dead or living man, which was not self-contradictory. . . . But the moment you tell me you mean the God of the Bible, or the God of the Koran, or the God of any particular Church, I am prepared to tell you that I deny that God.' 'To me,' says he, 'the word "God" standing alone is a word without meaning.' That being so, he could offer neither affirmation nor denial.

Mr. Bradlaugh held no atheistic theory such as is attributed by Herbert Spencer to Atheists generally, professing to 'explain' the origin of the universe by 'self-existence.' Still less did he hold the doctrine so commonly and carelessly attributed to Atheists, that 'things happen by chance.' He could indeed trace cause but 'a small way' in the universe. But he never offered chance as a substitute for cause.

Huxley's famous term 'Agnostic' was to many a refuge from the social stigma attaching to the bolder word. Such stigma Brad-

laugh never turned out of his way an inch to avoid. He pointed out that if Agnosticism merely says, 'I do not know the thing you assert,' it is not a philosophy at all, but a mere assertion of personal ignorance. In regard to which we may point out that Huxley generally avoided insisting on an ignorance in others parallel to his own. He never definitely alleged that the Bishop of Oxford or Dr. Martineau knew nothing about God, but only that he, Huxley, did not. But if Agnosticism adds to its own confession of ignorance, the supplement, 'Nor do you nor any one else know anything about God,' then it becomes a philosophy, and is identical with that which Charles Bradlaugh meant by Atheism.

Mr. Bradlaugh would have called himself a Monist rather than a Materialist. That is to say he was indifferent whether that which constitutes the universe, and includes in its manifestations matter and force and mind, was called matter or not. The important thing, in his view, was to recognize that these are all one existence and not two existences

standing over against each other. Such monism excluded God conceived as in any way external to the world.

There was a curious minor difference between Mr. Bradlaugh and that other great leader of atheistic opinion, George Jacob Holyoake, a noble-minded man, as to the relations of Secularism and Atheism. Need a Secularist be an Atheist? 'No,' said Holyoake, himself an enthusiast both for Atheism and for Secularism. Secularism, argued Holyoake, who was the original coiner of the term, consists simply in concentrating the attention on secular things,—and Theists may do that as well as Atheists. But however that may be, Mr. Bradlaugh thought that exclusive attention to the secular led straight to atheistic thinking; and his influence went for the practical amalgamation of the terms.

The claim to be *par excellence* 'Free-thinkers' is surely one which it is a shame to Christians to have allowed to the Secular and Atheistic propagandists as their monopoly. All real thought is free thought. If there is

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not freedom, there is not thinking. It is monstrous to assume that free thinking always leads to one result. Many of us who are convinced and enthusiastic Theists claim that we have reached that goal by the paths of thought which have been absolutely free, and we declare ourselves to be not less Freethinkers than Mr. Holyoake and Mr. Bradlaugh.

Now Professor Flint has alleged that 'Mr. Bradlaugh shows . . . a curious predilection for metaphysical conundrums.' And I confess it has always seemed to me that, for one who disclaimed all knowledge save that based on experience, he dwelt singularly much in the airy regions of metaphysical speculation. He had great dexterity in handling metaphysical terminology; he was by no means like Israel who, says Arnold, had no turn for metaphysics; and if he could only lure his opponent into some metaphysical definition of Deity, he generally succeeded in convicting him of real or seeming contradiction.

As a debater Mr. Bradlaugh had two or three formulae which he used with great

skill. Let us look at two of the most conspicuous shafts in his armoury.

One was the allegation that *we cannot believe in that which we cannot define*. Another was the allegation that *we cannot believe on the ground of some one else's experience*.

Offering the former statement as though it were a universal truth which no one would challenge, a fundamental law of reason, he would ask you to define God; and when no definition could be framed that was not open to criticism, he would deduce from his major premiss the conclusion that you did not really believe in the thing so inadequately defined. Or offering the general statement that we cannot reasonably believe on the basis of any experience but our own, he declined to recognize the force of any argument drawn from the religious experiences of the great masters and prophets of religion. Assuming his maxim, his conclusion was not to be gainsaid.

Surely without any disrespect one may venture to suggest these are somewhat questionable maxims.

Every man born into the world believes in millions of things which he is wholly unable to define. All simple, all uncompounded things are by their very nature incapable of definition. No man can define redness or sweetness; it is doubtful whether any man can define cause, or time, or space. It is certain that the man in the street cannot. Yet where is the man who does not believe in redness or sweetness, or cause or time, or space? Again, can any man among you give a definition of himself? Yet I never met the man who did not believe in his own existence.

Turning to the second formula, every man born into the world believes in millions of things of which he is absolutely destitute of experience. We all believe facts of history which befell before we were born. We all believe facts of contemporary life in countries where we have never been. We all believe facts of science, in astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, which we have never tested for ourselves, of which we are absolutely without experience. Testimony, no less than experience, is a ground of belief which it is

absolutely impossible to rule out of our intellectual life. Let it be weighed, tested,—nay, if you will, suspected; but ultimately, having stood the test, it is universally believed and has the right to be believed.

The fundamental error, as I deem, in Mr. Bradlaugh's conception of human nature was that he regarded the whole drama of our moral being as contained within the human organism, whereas the Theist recognizes our moral being as related to a Something, 'not ourselves, that makes for righteousness.' From the nature of the experienced reaction on our own spiritual being of that Something, not ourselves, we reach the conviction that that Something is psychic, what Fiske somewhat unfortunately calls quasi-human, comprises elements having correspondence with our consciousness, or in other words is a Living God. Failure to study and accurately estimate the facts of our moral consciousness, which are facts however they be accounted for, is a fundamental source of Atheism; and through that failure, as I think, Mr. Bradlaugh missed the mark.

To me then it seems that Bradlaugh's assault on Theism failed, as all such assaults must ever fail. Theism stands firm both as a philosophy founded on human reason, and as a necessary explanation of the facts of spiritual experience. But Theism has been cumbered and defiled by a multitude of superstitions growing from the soil of human ignorance or passion. Charles Bradlaugh was a mighty ally of all such as would cut down these evil growths; and so far none will recall his name with a warmer gratitude than the devout Theist himself. If Bradlaugh was sometimes harsh in language and in judgment, it was that he was a passionate lover of human freedom, a passionate hater of every meanness and injustice. If he often used speech concerning current notions of God which seemed to some irreverent and even pained men who were for every liberty of utterance, it was that the God presented in the name of popular religion seemed to him, not merely false, but essentially to be abhorred. He had no tolerance for the Jehovah who was represented as hounding

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on the Israelites to every excess of massacre. He had no tolerance for the Deity who was represented as condemning ninety-nine hundredths of his own rational creatures to everlasting torment. He helped towards making it for ever more impossible for Englishmen to believe in these horrible travesties of the Eternal. It is for those who believe in a God of infinite love and goodness to strive to build his temple on the ground which such men as the great Iconoclast have cleared.

LECTURE V

PURE THEISM : FRANCIS W. NEWMAN
AND THEODORE PARKER

IN the present Lecture we have to deal with two writers who ante-date our subjects of the last two lectures, in literary activity, by a considerable space of time. Francis W. Newman's two most important works belong exactly to the middle of the century. Theodore Parker's famous *Discourse* first saw the light as far back as 1842. But both were men of the future, speaking at first only to the few, misunderstood and misinterpreted for whole decades after they had struck their note. Though Mill's *Essay on Theism* was not in the hands of its readers till more than

thirty years after the *Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*, it is certain that dated by the general evolution of religious thought it belongs to an epoch at least a generation before the utterances of the two remarkable men with whom we now proceed to deal. Parker and Newman wrote too early for their words to be largely understood of the people. Mill was too wrapt round with the maxims of the thirties and the forties for his word on Religion to help the men of a later generation.

In the earliest decade of the nineteenth century, there were born, at four years interval, in a respectable family in London, two sons, whose life-stories were to be of profoundest interest. Their mother was of Huguenot extraction, and they were brought up by her loving care in rigid Calvinistic faith and with passionate attachment to the Bible. The family name was Newman. Of these two brothers the elder, John Henry, was profoundly to affect the religious thought of the century, and, after shaking Oxford to its centre, was to pass into the Roman Church, and

become the most illustrious English Romanist since the Reformation; the other, Francis William, was to carve for himself an isolated path, to be an outcast from the Christian Church for conscience' sake, to suffer many things, to be tried, to have tribulation; but to be an apostle of an intense and burning faith resting on no authority save the very constitution of the soul.

Like his great and illustrious brother, Francis William early gave the world his *Apologia*. This book, entitled *Phases of Faith*, is a marvellously interesting story of a soul. In it we see the spirit of man slowly, surely passing from the narrowest Calvinism to the free position of the purest Theism. It is impossible to-night to tell the story. At eleven a student of religious literature, at fourteen 'converted,' at seventeen he enthusiastically subscribed the Articles. Then this text and that would strike him as odd and cause him much distress, till at last Bible infallibility was gone, and he cast himself, he says, on 'Him who is called the Father of Lights,' resolved through all to follow whither-

soever the light should lead. Then we have him under the influence of a most earnest but most fanatical parish clergyman in Ireland, a cripple in body, but all fire in soul, under whose lead the young scholar renounces all scholarship whatever. Inspired by this man's flaming zeal he presently joined a missionary expedition to the East. At Aleppo he met that Mohammedan carpenter who startled him by saying, 'I will tell you, Sir, how the case stands. God has given you English a great many good gifts. You make fine ships, and sharp pen-knives, and good cloth and cotton; and you have rich nobles and brave soldiers; you write and print many learned books, dictionaries and grammars. All this is of God. But there is one thing which God has withheld from you, and has revealed to us; and that is, the knowledge of the true religion, by which one may be saved.'

Then came more doubts on the essentials of the orthodox faith, and the cold rebuffs of all to whom he turned for counsel, his brother, his beloved Irish clergyman, and others, till

grievously wounded, he cries, 'Oh, Dogma, Dogma, how dost thou trample under foot love, truth, conscience, justice !'

The gradual dissolving of the old Calvinism went on silently, till there came a period of rapid and startling development. The little rift in Bible infallibility grew rapidly to a great rent. The whole vast science of Biblical criticism began to have for him a meaning and a message. The historical credibility of book after book fell away. Even the Acts and the first three Gospels had much that was doubtful, somewhat that was incredible. 'Can I still be a Christian?' he asked himself. And he answered, 'Yes, for I have still the Christ of John and of Paul.' There seemed to him one test of a man's Christianity. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? His own soul still answered 'Yes,' and with passionate devotion he still claimed the Christian name.

But now his mind was at last prepared for the great passage from a religion based on authority to a religion based on the intuitions of the human soul. And so at the end

of what he designates his fifth period he found himself abandoning all second-hand faith whatsoever, even though proven the very word of Christ. But he realized that throughout these momentous changes his essential *religion* had remained the same. That was a certain sentiment towards God, and not a set of theological opinions. And whatever new criticisms of the Bible had been forced upon him, yet he found that throughout, this venerable Bible literature was pervaded by that very sentiment which was the warm and luminous centre of his own religion, a sentiment namely of perfect trust in 'the intimate sympathy of the Pure and Perfect God with the heart of each faithful worshipper.' So the Bible, spite of its innumerable imperfections, was still a mine whence he might hew rich store of precious metal.

And here to my mind Newman has reached by slow and laborious steps the mountain-citadel of pure religion,—the one sure faith which shall endure eternally, and even though it be submerged in the turmoil

of human disputation, shall yet shine out again to all mankind impregnable in its everlasting strength. He himself in the course of the years went further in the process of disintegration. He came to question the unique beauty of the character of Jesus. He came to doubt even the immortality of the children of God. But his essential Religion remained from this time unchanged, and it is with his essential Religion, his absolute faith in the communion of the soul with God, that we have to-night to do.

In two books chiefly Francis W. Newman expressed his vivid and reasoned faith. The one is his *Hebrew Theism*, in which, mainly in a lofty strain of measured lines, controlled by severe and careful reasoning, he sets forth that underlying spiritual and ethical religion which he esteems to form 'the common basis of Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedism.' The other is *The Soul, its Sorrows and its Aspirations*, and to this profoundly thoughtful and religious book we must turn if we would sound the deep well of his faith. The book aroused a cry of horror from men

wedded to accepted creeds and formulas, but by many an earnest soul, thirsting for God as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, it was received as a draught fresh from the springs of life.

Let us then inquire the drift and meaning of this book, *The Soul, its Sorrows and its Aspirations*.

It is described on the title-page as 'an essay towards the natural history of the Soul, as the true basis of theology.'

Newman employs the term 'Soul' not of the whole conscious being of a man. It does not in his usage cover either the intellect or organ of reasoning, or the conscience or organ of moral choice and conduct; but stands specifically for that element of a man by which he seeks and comes to know God, the organ of the purely spiritual or religious life.

And if Newman were met at the outset with the objection that before he can draw out a natural history of the soul so conceived, he must prove that it exists and has any attributes or activities at all, I conceive that

he would turn round on the objector and bid him in that case go to the physicist also and tell him that before he begins to investigate the phenomena of the physical world he must demonstrate that there is any physical world at all in existence. The physicist, as a physicist, leaves that practically superfluous demonstration to the metaphysician, and sets to work forthwith with his scales and measures. And in like manner Newman leaves to the metaphysician the demonstration that there is a soul; and forthwith sets to work with his appropriate instruments,—the chief difference between the cases being that the observer and recorder of the soul has to deal with operations of a delicacy infinitely beyond that of any microscope or balance in all the laboratories of Europe.

Professor Newman, then, presents us with a profoundly impressive study of the religious faculty in man,—that element in him by which he enters into conscious relation with God. While most philosophers argue from God to religion, he argues from religion to God. According to Newman, the soul has, in

such and such experiences, conscious contact with the unseen Spirit. These experiences are the most real and certain of all the experiences of consciousness. From the fact of their reality we are compelled to accept the reality of God.

I know well the criticisms which may be brought to bear against such a line of argument. It will be said, and said truly, that to the man who himself has no such experiences they can have no convincing power. But instead of struggling to convince the man who has no such experiences that they are valid, let us rather for a few minutes sit at our teacher's feet and let him unfold to us the actual activities which he finds within the experience of the soul.

The soul, says he, is 'that side of our nature by which we are in contact with the Infinite.' It 'is to things spiritual, what the conscience is to things moral.' And he proceeds to trace its earliest and simplest experiences. The first and simplest of all is awe—often accompanied by fear. The very first awakening of this sense of awe usually

arises from the darkness of the night. The walls of the chamber vanish. The familiar furniture is no more there. And the child is filled with a sense of the unknown, the unmeasured, the unexplored. What may be there? The eye can give no answer.

If the child comes early in contact with the mystery of death, deeper strikes the awe. A world unseen is vaguely suggested to the imagination. Where is the loved one gone? Tender hope suggests that the loved one is not gone quite away. The sense of mystery is deepened. There is that in the child which feels out into the boundless, the wonderful, the unknown.

All the history of religion teaches us that *Groves*—groves of trees,—have played a great part in fostering this emotion of awe;—the thick darkness broken by stray gleams of light,—especially when stars or moon alone send forth their beams—takes hold of the imagination with extraordinary power.

But the soul soon rises to a higher realm. The Sublime in starry sky, or illimitable, restless sea, or steadfast mountain forms,

seizes upon its attention ; and wonder grows stronger and full of intimations of something far beyond the routine of the daily round of work and eating and sleeping. And as still the inward awe swells within the soul, there comes a sense of some power, or principle, or person behind it all, not to be measured by any human plumb-line, before which there is an instinct to humble oneself and to recognize our own exceeding littleness. And this is the beginning of *Religion*.

When to these perceptions are added that of beauty, and the joy it is able to give, the unanalysed delight becomes the cradle of yet fairer and stronger emotions, and beauty prepares the heart for love.

By these processes and such as these, the soul, if all go well with it, by degrees grows into that enthusiasm for the Infinite which betrays itself in every ardour for the ideal, every straining of the best in a man towards the pure, the true, the beautiful, the good. It is by the generation of this enthusiasm deep down in the depths of our being that we are at last lifted up above the brute-life in

which our roots are plunged and become beings with conscious affinity with the Infinite and the Eternal.

After a careful study of the signs of design, and therefore of purpose and will in nature,—an argument which must be modified, but by no means superseded, in view of the things which Spencer and Darwin have taught us since Newman wrote,—he proceeds to show how, from the recognition of will and intelligence in nature, the soul is led inevitably to the recognition of One Personal God, however needful it may be to free that expression from any merely anthropomorphic meaning, and how then the soul is forthwith confronted with the question of questions, ‘Is God good?’ ‘Does God care for me, for me individually and separately, for me my personal self?’

The one formidable argument against any such happy conclusion lies in the existence of suffering and sin in God’s world. It would be absurd in a few minutes to attempt to show how Newman deals with this tremendous perplexity of the soul. Like most

religious philosophers, he pleads both the value of sorrow as a training of the soul, and the inevitability of sin if the will of man was to have a trace of freedom ; and he shows, to my mind conclusively, that it is not possible to conceive of God at all save holy, the very source of all goodness, the very fountain of all love,—a love which by its essence must be love for the individual, for the *one* in its loneliness and striving, for you, and for me, and for each several soul wakening into life in God's world. And so he leads on to the highest form of awe, that *reverence* which fills the pure soul in face of the perfect holiness of God.

But it is in the third section of his volume that Newman develops most fully his natural history of the Soul. There he considers that sense of personal relation to God, which forms the very holy of holies of the religious life. At the outset he emphatically insists that spiritual facts must be treated as facts and not as empty dreams. The facts are these, whatever their explanation. The true man of science will treat 'with tender

thoughtfulness ' the experiences alleged by the men who have felt them, though these be unscientific as a child. Nor may the sceptic try spiritual experiences by tests which must necessarily destroy them. And so all proposals to test the reality of the response to prayer by prayers made without faith in their reality for the mere sake of seeing whether they meet with response or not are necessarily vain. Syllogistic proof of the efficacy of prayer is as essentially impossible as syllogistic proof of the reality of the outward world. Not by subtlety of thought does any man become convinced that the outward world is there, but by the sheer experience of the physical senses. And not by subtlety of thought may a man be convinced that God is there, but only by sheer experience of that spiritual sense whose organ is the soul.

Now the moment the soul has risen to the adoration of the living God, it is borne in upon the man that the love between the soul and God lies not in one direction only, but is a communion between the finite and the infinite. And the fullness of the spiritual life

lies in the ever-growing strength of this divine communion.

Then in a passage of wonderful beauty Newman goes on to maintain that, while the life of *Conscience*, which has to do with conduct, is essentially *masculine*, the life of the *Soul*, which has to do with the love of God, is essentially *feminine*. The Conscience acts, commands. The religious element of our being feels, obeys. It supplies the upward look, the mood of reverence, the sense of infinite dependence, pressing towards a defender, a protector. All this is the feminine side of our humanity; and so, although too often despised and contemned by the masculine element, nevertheless in itself the nobler, the deeper, and the holier. And all this Newman presses in a phrase startling in its directness, which may be taken as containing the very essence of his religious thought: 'There is a mystery, revealed to but few,' says he, 'which thou, O Reader, must take to heart. Namely, if thy Soul is to go on into higher spiritual blessedness, it must become a *Woman*; yes, however manly thou

be among men.' It must love to be dependent. Towards God it must not strive for rights, for liberty, for independence, for self-rule. However much a man take that attitude towards kings and princes, autocrats and tyrants, legislatures and governments; towards God the one desire must be to learn his will and do it, to be servant of his law. Not only in stress of need or danger, but in the pleasant and quiet days no less, must the soul turn to him, pouring out its thoughts to him and taking joy in his conscious presence. There is a higher law than 'thou *shalt* love the Lord.' Not by compulsion is the woman's yearning to her husband. The highest thought of all is this: 'Thou *mayst* love the Lord.' To the spiritualized soul the permission, the invitation, the capacity to love God is the supremest thing.

And in the full religious life, our mystic philosopher would have us know, it is in one way as if the soul were quite alone with God. The soul feels that God so loves her as if there were no other soul than herself in the universe. She well *knows* indeed that to

every soul the love of God is as rich as it is to her. But the *feeling* is as if the whole fullness of God were poured into her own being. And when this high level of spiritual life has been attained, life becomes a song. 'Cheerfulness, elasticity, hope, vivacity, serenity' become the temper of every day; and by a strange spiritual alchemy even pain and suffering cannot disturb the glad serenity. So that we have that wonderful phenomenon, which it is vain and useless for philosophers to ignore, of the bereft, the desolate, the sorely sick, folk wracked with pain, overflowing with the spirit of thankfulness and joy. And it is at best a sorry philosophy which accounts for this wonderful strength and triumph and glory of the spirit on the score of a gigantic delusion and mistake.

And so our exponent, in his natural history of the soul, has brought us to that which—in consonance with a metaphor lying deep in the vocabulary of historic religion—he would call her *marriage* with her Lord. That marriage indeed may still be broken by frailty or guilt in the soul, but, once con-

summated in its fullness, God will find a way to make it whole once more. And in that state the soul by degrees becomes satisfied that it is a marriage without end, and that she cannot exhaust the limits of the love of her Lord for her whom he has taken to be his own.

Such imagery, to the man who knows nought or little of this life of the soul, must seem exaggerated and unreal. And most of us, alas! have got but a very little way towards that perfect union with the Soul of souls. Newman himself insists that there are myriads,—good, honourable, wholly well-meaning in life and thought,—who have barely caught a glimpse of this high life that is open to the human soul. But with firm conviction, and as one who only speaks of that which he sees and knows, he outlines thus the growth of the soul, from the first tremblings of awe in the mystery of night or shadowy grove, up to this pure and exalted companionship with God. To one who can write, out of the records of his observation and experience, such an argument as this, all ordinary pleas of agnostic or of atheist must seem a puny

voice indeed,—mere tinklings of brass or clanging of tin. And if there be some who, because they know not of these things, cannot receive his witness, yet even they can surely confess the wonderful beauty of his thought, and do homage to the pure and gentle spirit who could so conceive of the relation of the human soul and God.

We pass on to the consideration of a singularly heroic figure, the figure of one who blew his blast for God and righteousness far back in the forties and the fifties, but whose apotheosis in America and England came far on in the sixties and the seventies.

Theodore Parker, scholar, reformer, preacher, hero, stands forth a noble and fascinating figure in any or in all of those capacities. We have to do with him here solely as a thinker and teacher in matters pertaining to Religion. But in his own thought and emotion all things that have to do with man are matters pertaining to Religion. And we cannot extract the doctrine and put away the man; for the personality,

the character, so vivid, rugged, strenuous, passionately earnest, yet withal so gentle and so tender, colours the doctrine indelibly at every joint and link. One would love to talk about Parker all the while. It is hard to turn to the cold analysis of the philosophy and religion which he taught.

Like Francis W. Newman, Parker found the fundamental proof of religious truth in the living soul of man. For him, Religion *was* ; it had not to be constructed. The science of Religion, both for Newman and for him, was not primarily an abstract philosophy ; it was a natural history,—a description of certain actual elements in man, native to him and normal. The source of the knowledge of God was not without, like that of stars or rocks or plants, but within, in the mind, the heart, the soul.

Parker's latest biographer, a man wholly of his own spirit, the Rev. John White Chadwick, of Brooklyn, says that though Parker's works have been gathered by that devout disciple, Frances Power Cobbe, into no less than fourteen volumes, yet in his life-time he

published only 'three real books.' These were the *Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion*, the *Ten Sermons of Religion*, and *Theism, Atheism, and the Popular Theology*; 'and the greatest of these,' says Chadwick, 'was the *Discourse*.'

For several weeks the young man of thirty-one worked, he tells us, from fifty to eighty hours a week on this most notable manifesto. It was a tremendous stroke for Religion—'the Absolute Religion,' as he declared—against all conceptions or negations thereof current in the churches or outside. It raised a mighty storm of protest chiefly within those Unitarian circles where, had not the eyes of men been holden, it should have been received with profoundest gratitude. But thirty years were to elapse before the advanced guard of the Christian world should perceive and realize that this *Discourse*, so valiant for God, so merciless to all religion 'from the mouth outwards,' so tender, so reverent towards all goodness and natural piety, made straight for those things by which alone churches which stood for

progressive religious thought could ultimately live.

It is only of the *Discourse* that it will be possible to speak in the present lecture, and only of its leading and most characteristic affirmations.

Whence is Religion ? The foolish answer, says Parker, is that it arises from the fear, the ignorance, the selfishness of men, practised on by hypocritical priests and knavish kings. The wise answer, on the other hand, is that Religion 'comes out of a principle deep and permanent in the constitution of man.' Such a religious element in man is clearly demonstrable. It is demonstrable historically by the universality of religious phenomena throughout the history of man. It is demonstrable practically by the experience of our own consciousness of the religious element within us. 'We feel an irresistible tendency,' says Parker, 'to refer all outward things, and ourselves with them, to a Power beyond us, sublime and mysterious, which we cannot measure, nor even comprehend.'

Now, says Parker, foreshadowing an argument more scientifically stated half a century later by Fiske, this religious element in man, our experience of this sense of dependence, proves by implication the *existence of its object*, 'something on which dependence rests.' Reason, prior to all reasoning, gives us an *Idea* of that on which we thus depend. To this *Idea* we give the name of God or Gods. The *Idea* in the first place does not depend on either an *a priori* nor an *a posteriori* argument, though these come in afterwards to confirm abundantly. It depends in the first place not on argument, but on the very structure of our innate Reason, for 'we cannot be conscious of ourselves except as *dependent* beings.'

But we are not content with the *Idea* of God. To that inborn *Idea*, we by natural desire attempt to add a *Conception* of God, that is some figure or image or picture or description of God which shall make the *Idea* more vivid, easier to grasp and to hold. And so Parker distinguishes rigidly in theory (not always quite rigidly, I think, in practice)

between the Idea of God and the Conception of God. The Conception, our imagination, of God must always fall short of the reality, for the Finite, in the nature of things, can never really conceive or image the Infinite. Parker holds that the pure Idea of God, which is part of our being, if thought out logically gives 'a Being of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness.' But what goes beyond that is the evanescent *Conception*, and is necessarily coloured by qualities derived from the time, place, race, and personality of the individual holder of the Idea.

The religious faculty in man is, then, the cause of the fact of Religion. But this faculty (in spite of apparent exceptions) is universal. It is indestructible. And it is the strongest faculty in man. For Religion man will make greater sacrifices than for any other element in his being whatsoever. Hence the vast place of Religion in the whole story of our race. There is fundamentally but one Religion. All Religion is at bottom the sense of dependence on God. Religion indeed assumes many *forms* in regard to its

central Idea as thoughts and emotions drawn from other spheres mingle with it in the breast of the individual man. But behind all phases of Religious thought or feeling lies the Absolute Religion, that which constitutes it Religion; and the life of that Religion consists in 'voluntary subjection to the law of God, inward and outward obedience to that law' revealed by the hand of God through Instinct, Reason, Conscience, and the emotions of the Religious sense itself. Religion is associated both with Theology and with Morality, but neither of these is itself Religion.

After a survey of the historical phases of Religion of the Fetishistic and Polytheistic types, and a short description and criticism of Pantheism which holds that All is God, and does not conceive God as distinct from the Universe nor independent of it, Parker goes on to consider Monotheism which 'is the worship of One Supreme God.' Monotheism may regard God in one *form*, as in the case of the Jew, the Mohammedan or, we may add, the Unitarian Christian, or in three

forms as in the case of Trinitarian Christianity, or in *all* forms as in the case of the Indian and Hellenic Polytheism after their ultimate transformation into the worship of Brahma or of Pan. Thus the *Sentiment* of God—apart from the intellectual *Idea* of God—is always at bottom the same (a somewhat ambiguous and doubtful statement). So is the *Idea* itself. It is only the *Conception*, that is, our image, of God which is for ever shifting and changing,—casting off worn-out elements as the mind and spirit of the race clarify and ascend. That *Conception* gradually approximates to the *Idea* innate in our constitution, and the *Conception* and the *Idea* ultimately coalesce in presenting a God infinite in Power, Wisdom, and Goodness. Meanwhile no man's *Conception* wholly casts off adventitious and finite elements, and all men's *Conceptions* fall short of the supreme Reality.

In the actual religious world we find Religion adulterated in many ways. There, mingle with it Wisdom or Folly, Hope or Fear, Love or Hate. When Fear together

with Ignorance or Folly mixes with the pure religious sentiment we get Superstition, which may be defined as Fear before God. It leads to derogatory prostrations of the soul and coarse and materialistic modes of worship. When Hatred mingles its loathsome emotions with the religious sentiment, we get Fanaticism, which may be defined as Hatred before God. 'The Superstitious man fears lest God hates him; the Fanatic thinks he hates not him but his enemies.' The result is vengeance in the name of God, persecution, tortures, the Inquisition, religious wars, Smithfield fires. Superstition and Fanaticism are the horrible corruptions of Religion. Only when that emotion which is the opposite of both Fear and Hatred, the emotion which we call Love, mixes with the religious sentiment do we get the life of Religion in all its strength, its graciousness, its ineffable purity and sweetness. It may be defined as the life of Love before God. Here the religious sentiment passes into 'harmonious combination with Reason, Conscience, and Affection.' The product is 'the most beautiful develop-

ment of human nature.' The first Book of the *Discourse* closes with a marvellously beautiful passage, fervent with all the eloquence of the prophet, on that 'Solid Piety' which is thus evoked. 'In the high hour of religious visitation from the living God,' we read 'there seems to be no separate thought; the tide of universal life sets through the soul.' That is the mountain-peak of the life of this perfect piety; the levels of its everyday plains and valleys give a life of hourly love and trust and peace.

The Second Book treats at length of that *Inspiration*, or living and conscious touch of man with God, which this last section of the First has thus briefly indicated.

Parker, it is to be observed, questions the value or propriety of the term 'personal' applied to God, for he holds that 'our conception of Personality is that of finite personality; limited by human imperfections; hemmed in by Time and Space; restricted by partial emotions, displeasure, wrath, ignorance, caprice.' To which I should reply that, if by Personality we do thus mean

human

finite personality, of course we should offend both sense and reverence by calling God a Person. But if by Personality we mean, as we may legitimately mean, those positive endowments which distinguish self-determining beings from the purely passive and unconscious, without reference to those limitations in conjunction with which only we know personality in man, then the whole drift and scope and purpose and essence of Parker's teaching requires that we think of God as Person; and this comes out irresistibly precisely in these noble chapters upon Inspiration.

It is true, our essayist proceeds, that no man can fathom the being or the nature of God. Yet we possess a positive Idea of God. And within the contents of that Idea are embraced 'Being, Cause, Knowledge, Love, each with no conceivable limitation.' What more can we actually say of him, expanding and expounding these implicit contents of his being?

He is immanent in Matter and perpetually active in its every part. The Laws of Nature at the last analysis are simply and

solely the expression of the Will of God. But God is no less immanent in man. As he is the materiality in Matter, so is he the spirituality in Spirit. God cares, through the laws of Matter, for the sparrow's body; shall he not care, through the laws of Spirit, for the human being's Soul? As there is *material* intercourse between God and the diamond, shall there not be *conscious* intercourse between God and the Man? All primitive peoples believed that God spoke to the human mind in language which the mind could receive and interpret. Only with modern (or ancient) culture, scepticism questions. That scepticism is reinforced by sundry extravagant claims put forth concerning our intercourse with God. Now concerning Inspiration, the speech of God to man, but three views are possible.

We may, first, totally deny it, which Parker calls 'the Rationalistic view, or Naturalism.' This view regards all that religious men describe as Revelation or Inspiration as mere effects of Matter acting on the Senses. There is no external spiritual reality in it at all.

The whole spiritual drama goes on only on the stage of the man's own consciousness. It is delusion and nothing more. Such a theory fails to meet the facts of the religious life.

Secondly, we may recognize only abnormal or miraculous Revelation or Inspiration, which Parker calls 'the Anti-Rationalistic view, or Supernaturalism.' This theory sets apart individual men as admitted to an Inspiration to which ordinary men have no corresponding faculty. So these ordinary men must be content to take their information about God and his law from the mouths or the pens of these special commissioners of the Most High, who alone have the seals of office. This doctrine is counter to the facts, and contrary to the reign and rule of law as the universal method of God.

Finally, there is the theory that 'there is a natural supply for spiritual as well as for corporeal wants,' which Parker calls 'the Natural-Religious view, or Spiritism.' According to this view, which is of course his own, as there is connection between light and the eye, sound and the ear, food and the

palate, or again between truth and the intellect, beauty and the imagination, so is there connection between God and the Soul. If we observe the law of the Body, we have Nature on our side; so, if we observe the law of the Soul, we have God on our side. 'We have direct access to him through Reason, Conscience, and the Religious Faculty, just as we have direct access to Nature through the eye, the ear, and the hand.' By 'a law as certain, regular, and universal as gravitation, God inspires men, makes Revelation of truth.' Religious insight is as normal as seeing. The clearness of spiritual vision depends on the clearness of the perceiving faculty, just as the clearness of physical vision depends on the clearness of the eye. All men indeed have not equally clear vision in either case; but in both cases vision is natural to man. 'Each man stands close to the omnipresent God; all may feel his beautiful presence, and have familiar access to the All-Father.' The prophet is simply, as the old word describes him, the 'see-er,' the 'seer,' the man who sees with

more piercing vision than the rest. But all men have the seeing power. No man sees God perfectly any more than any man sees perfectly a flower, a star, or a human face. Therefore no man's doctrine is the Absolute Religion. Doctrines of Religion have their limits of extent and of duration.

But enough of the Absolute Religion is open to us to make real to us the experience of prayer. All men who have ever really prayed, prayed with heart and soul in tune with God, know that prayer is real, is not a monologue within the human consciousness, but a converse between the human and the divine, a dialogue between man and God. Greatly to pray is not given to us every day. The seasons of the most vivid communion between a man and God are never frequent. 'Happy is he that has ten such,' says Parker, 'in a year, yes, in a life-time.' But rare though those seasons be, 'they are the seed-time of life.' In a few moments we live whole years. But the remembrance of those moments all through life 'comes over us like the music of our home heard in a distant land.' It is 'a

pillar of fire in the darkness, to guide us through the lonely pilgrimage of life.'

Such is the great Gospel of Theodore Parker, the man shunned as a heretic by those in orthodox repute, the man who pitied and helped the slave in the black night of that vast crime of American slavery, the man whose inward build was that of the hero, whose heart was yet as tender as that of a little child.

Here and there undoubtedly, as Martineau and others have pointed out, he used the language of Pantheism; but always his meaning was the meaning of pure and absolute Theism. In the ecstasy of his faith in the mingling of the Spirit of God with that of his human child, he fell—or shall we not say rose—into a manner of speech in which the soul of man seemed merged in the being of God, and it seemed as if God were the All-in-All. No prophet, in whom the God-note sounded, has ever escaped that blurring of speech; for indeed he speaks of experiences for which human words are too poor and mean a vehicle. But it is not to be laid as a charge against him that he is caught up

by the Spirit and that the mere intellect reels on the giddy height whither the Spirit bears him. Parker enounces for us the faith in the Living God at its loftiest altitude and in its purest and richest essence.

As he lay a-dying in beautiful Florence far from the scenes of his battles and his storms, Frances Power Cobbe, who was afterwards to carry his message to many hearts, visited him in his exceeding weakness. Half wandering, there at the very threshold of death, he said to her: 'There are two Theodore Parkers now: one is dying here in Italy; the other I have planted in America. He will live there and finish my work.' It was true. His word had been written indelibly in chosen souls. Multitudes who never heard him alive, found new revelations of God in his writings when he was dead. They, too, who had turned away from him in the flesh, with a true and manly contrition helped to build a gracious sepulchre for him when he had passed away. Of no son of man was the great word ever more truly said: 'he being dead, yet speaketh.'

LECTURE VI

JAMES MARTINEAU AND THE OUTLOOK TO-DAY

THERE can, I suppose, be no serious doubt that James Martineau was the foremost exponent of Theism in England in the Nineteenth Century. It is not necessary to accept every detail of his philosophy to reach this conclusion. One may even dissent from important elements of his philosophical doctrine. But there is, I think, no other name which stands for a more massive treatment of the whole theistic argument than his. Not only did no other champion meet the assaults of the great sceptical thinkers of his time with a more sure and brilliant skill, but

he laid the foundations of the citadel of theistic faith with a breadth and a resource in which he was, in his day, without a rival.

James Martineau's life almost covered the whole century with which in these Lectures we are concerned. Born, like Francis W. Newman, in 1805, the year before Mill, four years before Darwin, Tennyson, and Gladstone, five before Theodore Parker, fifteen before Herbert Spencer and John Tyndall, seventeen before Matthew Arnold, twenty before Thomas Henry Huxley, he survived them all save Spencer, passing away in the early days of the year 1900. Without aid of any kind from position or ecclesiastical connection, by sheer force of genius and of industry, he slowly built up for himself a fame as a thinker which won him recognition from five great Universities and from the culture of Europe and America. To count the daily hours he worked through the main part of his life and the great tale of years through which he lived, suggests the speculation whether any denizen of this planet has ever passed so vast a total of hours in severe intellectual

labour as he, though Kant conceivably may have run him close. We are to-night to try to set forth the main product of those innumerable hours of mental toil.

Originally trained in schools in which that necessarian philosophy prevailed which definitely or practically denies the freedom of the human will, and in which a Christianity was professed, unorthodox indeed, but resting on the foundation of external miracle, before he had advanced far in middle life, he had arrived at a much broader and more spiritual position both in philosophy and in religion. He first came widely before the public in philosophical articles contributed to the *Prospective Review* in the forties and the fifties, and to the *National Review* in the fifties and the sixties. These articles, together with the series of his public College addresses, included trenchant and brilliant criticisms, sometimes in the main favourable, sometimes in the main adverse, of most of the writers on whom we have dwelt in previous lectures, Mill and Spencer, Arnold and Tyndall, Newman and Parker. Perhaps the first of his purely philo-

sophical essays that awakened realization how great a thinker had arisen in our midst was his critique on John Stuart Mill's *Dissertations and Discussions* in 1859, though the attention of the thoughtful had already been arrested by his reviews of Sir William Hamilton and Dean Mansel, with their dangerous concessions to a sceptical philosophy.

In his treatment of Mill's *Dissertations*, Martineau, in the fullness of his power, presses home the consequences of the maxim of Mill that human knowledge is confined to phenomena, that we know nothing substantive or permanent ^{as} which is the groundwork from which phenomena spring forth. Such limitation of the realm of our knowledge shuts out all knowledge of Space, or of Time, or of Substance, whether Matter or Mind, or of Cause. It leads to a scorn of the very notion of Purpose in the Universe and chills the roots of Wonder in our hearts. Mill may be summed up as teaching that 'we know of nothing without,' that is, have no knowledge at all of the existence of an outward world;

'we know of only change within,' that is, have no knowledge of anything in ourselves but the succession of sensations and feelings and thinkings, have no knowledge of an abiding self which is the seat of these successions. Nay, Mill is shown to land us logically in still more extravagant absurdities, for putting different sections of his teaching side by side, we find, first, that we know nothing about anything except our own sensations and feelings and thinkings; and, secondly, that nevertheless we know that we get these sensations and feelings and thinkings from an objective world outside ourselves. At one moment Mill dissolves the outward world in 'me,' in the next he dissolves 'me' in the outward world. The essay is a brilliant demonstration of the quagmire of confusion into which our minds are plunged if we try to get rid of such innate beliefs as the belief in Cause, in our own existence, and in the existence of the outward world.

In a further essay, which I believe was first communicated to the Metaphysical

Society in 1870, Martineau presses home against Mill the fact that we are compelled to believe in a cause behind all phenomena, which is something more than 'invariable sequence,' or even than 'unconditional invariable sequence.' Mill had maintained—and it was of the very essence of his philosophy—that all that we really mean when we say that so and so is the cause of such and such a phenomenon is that so and so always precedes that phenomenon, and that if we imported any sort of compelling power into our idea of cause, that was illegitimate and purely the result of association of ideas, a constantly observed sequence illogically suggesting to us a compulsory sequence. This position Martineau met with absolute contradiction. In a wonderfully close and trenchant argument, he maintained that an effect must always be a phenomenon and a phenomenon different from its cause; thence, that though the effect must always be a phenomenon the cause itself can never be a phenomenon. 'Every phenomenon has a cause,' says he, 'instead of meaning (as commonly supposed),

“Every phenomenon invariably succeeds another phenomenon,” really means, “Every phenomenon springs from something other than phenomenon,” —that is something that is permanent and enduring, not evanescent and without substance. Finally, further analysis reveals that cause means force, and that force means power, and that power involves will. Therefore, the true ‘axiom of causality,’ as Martineau conceives it, that is, the necessary thinking of our minds about causality, is ‘Every phenomenon springs from a Will.’ If ever we seem to elude that axiom, it is only by inaccurate or slovenly thinking. Every phenomenon, everything that happens or has ever happened in the whole vast story of evolution, springs from Will. If that be so, if, as Martineau maintains, it only needs us to read accurately our own necessary thought, the ultimate ineradicable conviction of our minds, in order to be convinced that that is so, then Theism stands impregnable for ever, and no Agnosticism, Atheism, or Materialism can ever ultimately prevail against it.

Martineau's review of Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*, which appeared in the *National Review* for October, 1862, is of immense historical as well as philosophical interest. Spencer's famous Essay caught Martineau, I think, a little at a disadvantage. He did not know and he could not know the stupendous effect which the book was destined to exercise on human thought. He could not foresee the series of volumes dealing with every field of the universe by which it was to be supported, supplemented, and illustrated. There are expressions which reveal that he did not realize that henceforth all religious philosophy would have to make its account with the facts and the doctrine of Evolution. Spencer seems to have been to him only one more sceptical and negative philosopher; and he did not realize that here was one greater than Mill, greater than Hamilton, greater than Mansel, one of the colossal figures in the slow history of human thinking, to stand out like Plato, like Aristotle, like Kant, monumental and significant for unnumbered centuries to come.

But if Martineau hardly appreciated all that the publication of *First Principles* meant, if he leads off in a somewhat slighting tone, if he never grew quite at ease with the Evolution theory, he would not be Martineau if his review did not comprise many criticisms of searching insight, some making real breaches in important parts of Spencer's argument, others showing how, where the argument is good, it does no real harm to the philosophy of Theism.

Martineau declares himself quite ready to conceive the world to have come into being 'not by paroxysms of omnipotence, but by perpetual flow of power stealing to the roots of things'; so to think of God as not to say 'that once he *did create*, but that now and always he *is creating* the heavens and the earth.'

But Martineau's strength is exerted to show that Spencer's 'Absolute' on his own showing is not 'Unknowable.' Spencer himself declares that the Absolute exists; that much, then, at any rate, we know of this unknowable. But the very term 'Absolute'

implies a relation to the 'Relative'; and the Absolute and the Relative are after all correlated; and the Absolute is no more 'absolute' in such a sense as would thrust it out of the field of human knowledge.

Martineau goes on to argue that to say that the Absolute or the First Cause is 'wholly removed from our apprehension' is not only an attribution of ignorance to us, but also an attribution of a certain impotence to the Absolute or God, inasmuch as it implies that he has not the faculty of making himself known. This, he says, is a contradiction of Spencer's own assertion that this Being must be 'perfect, complete, total, including in itself all power, and transcending all law.' But here surely Dr. Martineau is hardly sufficiently guarded. To say that this Being does not make himself apprehensible by us, is not necessarily to say that he could not if he would. To dogs, to horses, to babies, he certainly does not make himself apprehensible. But no one would think of making that a ground of charging him with only limited power. It in no way impairs his per-

fection. The whole question is, not whether God (if we use the name) could make himself known to minds with the necessary powers of apprehension; but solely whether we ourselves actually possess the necessary organ for apprehending him. If the limitation in ourselves were freely admitted, that would involve no limitation whatever in him.

Martineau is on stronger ground when he presses on Spencer the consequences which are involved when he describes the Absolute as Force or Energy. Spencer argues that the force exhibited in the phenomena of nature cannot be of the same kind as the force which we exert in lifting a chair, because in our muscular exertion we have certain feeling or sensation, and it would be absurd to suppose that, when the force of gravity opposes us, the chair has like feelings or sensations. But it is easy for Martineau to point out that the consciousness is not in our muscles but in the unseen mind behind; and in like manner the consciousness involved in the expenditure of force in nature must be supposed to reside, not in the chair, or the

stone, or the star, but in the living Will which is neither chair, nor stone, nor star.

And so Martineau contends that Spencer halts between two opinions. He can understand the Positivist who says that we cannot get behind the laws of nature, and forbids us to talk about Cause at all. But he cannot understand the philosopher who insists with the best of us that there is indeed an Eternal Cause moving through all these laws, yet will have it that we can know nothing of the nature of this Cause. It is true that we cannot conceive, imagine, or picture, the nature of this Being. But we have and must have a real idea of it, an actual knowledge; for that is involved in the very recognition of it as the Cause of all that is.

Martineau's trials of strength with Tyndall showed him at his greatest power, and confirmed his reputation as the mightiest champion of the theistic interpretation of the universe of his time. But inasmuch as I have myself availed myself largely of his arguments, it will be well to pass on to the more continuous writings of the great

philosophical teacher with whom we are to-night concerned.

Dr. Martineau's substantial philosophical works are three, *Types of Ethical Theory*, published in 1885; *A Study of Religion*, published in 1888; and *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, published in 1890. Of these, the first, namely, the *Types of Ethical Theory*, is a massive and potent assault on all those theories of the moral law which regard the usefulness or happiness-producing character of a line of conduct as constituting the essence of its goodness, and all those cognate theories which hold that we cannot really down at bottom shape our conduct by our own free will, but are compelled to act by the force of antecedents which leaves us powerless to make any real choice at all. That is, it is an effort to refute Utilitarian and Determinist Ethics; and to substitute for them a theory which recognizes both the freedom of the human will to make its own unconstrained choice between any two competing lines of conduct, and also the existence of an absolute and unanalysable moral good

perceived by the conscience beyond and apart from all considerations of the pleasure or the convenience to which it may conduce. Such a theory raises the human soul to the highest elevation and stands in close alliance with Martineau's type of Theism.

As for the third of these three great treatises, *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, it is in part a recapitulation of the Ethics and the Philosophy of the earlier works, levelled to the comprehension of a somewhat less highly trained class of reader, and partly a criticism of the positions severally of Roman Catholics and Protestants, together with an elaborate exposition of the higher criticism of the New Testament. Martineau here, too, it need not be said, was an accomplished scholar, but he had not the same authority as in the purely philosophical field. While the *Types* and the *Study* were in the main acceptable to all men of theistic conviction, including the whole Christian Church, the *Seat of Authority* was highly polemic within the borders of Christianity; and probably many others, besides such admirers as

Tennyson and Mr. Richard Hutton, an old and beloved pupil, felt some regret that the third work had been added to the other two.

But our purpose in these lectures on Agnosticism and Theism in the Nineteenth Century will probably be best served by confining ourselves to a brief summary of the second, and to my mind the greatest of this marvellous trinity of treatises, all three of them finally revised and published by the author in the years from the eightieth to the eighty-fifth of his age.

This monumental work, the *Study of Religion*, begins with an elaborate discussion of that preliminary problem of the limits and the trustworthiness of our intellectual powers which throughout these lectures has continually haunted us, and the whole resources of the essayist are thrown into a plea for trusting the veracity of our own intellectual nature wherever it makes a clear and decisive utterance. It is of course open to you to say that we have no guarantee that the fundamental processes of the intellect do not lead us utterly astray. But if you stand by

that, two momentous consequences immediately ensue,—the one, that we can have no knowledge or criterion of truth whatever, the other, that all human life is merged in universal lunacy. I cannot act as disbelieving the axioms of my own mental constitution; and if I did, society would at once and rightly clap a strait-waistcoat about my body.

Frankly accepting, then, the veracity of our own faculties, the position that our minds are not a huge and elaborate lie, what have our minds to teach us concerning the tremendous problem that lies between the Atheist, or the Agnostic, and the Theist? The heart of the *Study of Religion* is occupied with the answer to that question drawn along a double line, the one resting on our sense of Cause, the other on our sense of Right.

After all that has transpired in our review of other thinkers, we shall feel no surprise to find Martineau setting out in this part of his task with a careful discussion of the essence of the idea of cause. And he shows that, however loosely we talk of this being the

cause of that, we always have in our mind the idea of some compelling power which from the antecedent produces the effect. And it transpires that the full idea of cause is 'permanent power passing through phenomena.'

But there is one kind of cause of which we have immediate knowledge. One of my earliest discoveries in life is that the Self which I am can put forth force, and that that force finds itself antagonized by force put forth by some other. It is only when my force meets with resistance, small or great, that it becomes conscious. But then, in one revealing flash, I become aware of my Will as a conscious putter forth of force; and of some other putting forth force against me; and I recognize that other as also Will, as I am Will.

To Dr. Martineau then all those generalizations which we call Laws of Nature are nothing else or less than so many distinct permanent volitions, the fruit of a Will which is the supreme First and Enduring Cause of Nature and all her processes.

Such is the direct result of interrogating

our own natural and innate consciousness with regard to all the happenings of the universe. But it is as well to check it by asking whether the universe *looks as if* it were the result of Will. What are the chief signs of a deliberate and conscious purpose in any procedure that distinguish it from mere hap-hazard? They are Selection, Combination, and Gradation. He who seeks to bring about an end, he who seeks a purpose, *selects* his means, *combines* together means that will help each other, and takes *successive steps*, or advances by gradations, towards the end in view.

Does the universe or our world show signs in its make and processes of such procedure?

Is there *Selection*? Why, with the prefix 'Natural,' that is the very term which latter-day science uses to describe the ways of nature. Taking this up, and pressing considerations to show that the *lines* of selection cannot be accounted for by chance, but look as if some purpose had been behind them, Martineau accepts it as the first link of his account of the making of the worlds.

But is there *Combination* in the building of things as they are? Why, certainly, the 'law of the correlation of organs' is one endless string of examples of the natural combination of co-operating means. It is the very essence of every department of biology. *physics*

And *Gradation*? Why, it is absolutely universal. What else does Evolution mean? Nature is always working on from climax to climax. Each lower form of being leads on to the higher. Each is, on the one hand, an end, the consummation of a long series of movements towards the goal, but each is, on the other hand, also a new beginning, the start of fresh movements towards a yet higher thing that is to be.

Thus the whole vast story in the sweep of its immensity and in all its innumerable parts is one continuous example of that method by Selection of means, Combination of means, and Gradation of successive stages which is the fundamental characteristic of conscious purpose working onwards towards an end.

The other great theistic argument of Martineau lies along the lines of our moral

nature, not the demand of our intellect for cause, but the demand of our conscience for righteousness.

To sum up the argument in a sentence, it is this: 'As our own Will gives us the clue to God as the universal Cause, so our own Conscience reveals to us God as the Supreme Holiness.'

In the *Types of Ethical Theory*, Dr. Martineau had laid down and enforced the doctrine that every man has in his own breast a series of possible motives, a concourse of 'springs of action,' and further, that whenever any two of these wake up in him at the same moment and try to claim him—say, compassion and acquisition,—suggesting two different ways of behaving in a given case, he immediately, by some index in the very heart of his being, becomes conscious that one is *worthier* than the other and has an intrinsic right and claim over the other and over him. And Martineau attempts to set down in a graded scale *all* possible springs of action, appetites, passions, affections, and so on, in the order of their relative worthiness from

Sensoriousness and Vindictiveness at the very bottom up to Compassion and Reverence at the very top. Further, Martineau insists—it is the very core of his argument—that however vivid be lust or greed in us at the moment, however faint, on the contrary, the pull towards purity or generosity, we always can, if we will, repulse the former and obey the latter. In thus overcoming temptation and preferring the good, lies our capacity for making that which we call *character*.

The question then is ‘whence comes this Moral Law of which we are inwardly and unmistakably conscious?’ Some say that it is due to the pressure of public opinion, the influence of surrounding society through countless generations. But Martineau replies that our sense of moral obligation is a totally different kind of feeling from our love of praise or dislike of blame from our fellow men. Rather is the sense of the Moral Law within us an instinctive sense that we owe something, are under obligation, to some other than ourselves, higher and holier, who has a right to command and to require. It points directly

to the independent existence of a Righteous One whose law is woven in the very fibre of our souls.

In passages of extraordinary beauty our prophet-philosopher proceeds to deduce the necessary characteristics of this Holy Spirit overshadowing us and claiming us,—benevolence to all that are sentient, justice to all that are moral, amity or friendship to all that are in moral kinship with himself.

Having deduced from our *intellectual* constitution a God in whom dwell all knowledge, power, and wisdom, and from our *ethical* constitution a God in whom dwell all benevolence, justice, and love, Martineau proceeds to show that these are necessarily not two Gods but one,—and specifically that the almightiness is not alien to or other than the goodness, but that these exist in absolute union and unity in the one almighty and all-holy Being.

The succeeding chapters warn the reader from being caught captive by many seductive reasonings which make against the great conclusion, and the whole consummate and

magnificent work concludes with a book on the Life to Come, considered successively from the physiological, the metaphysical, and the moral points of view.

The central and characteristic contribution of Martineau to the Philosophy of Religion lies in his twofold argument to God from our intellectual demand for causality and our moral demand for a divine source and fount of goodness. In the strength of the first he has perhaps been equalled by others. In the strength, the brilliancy, the moving fervour, the uplifting inspiration, of the latter, I doubt whether he has been equalled in the literature of man. In these things, in the analysis of our moral nature, he spoke the things that he knew. He had but with steady hand to exhibit the moral nature as he found it in himself, and the demonstration that it implied and necessitated God was complete.

He built his Theism then on the demand of the Understanding for a Living Cause behind Phenomena, and the demand of the Conscience for a Living Righteousness behind the Moral Law. There is, however, a

third fact of human nature which makes for Theism, the perception by the Emotions of a Living Love behind the Beautiful or the Sublime. Under the pure ministry of Nature the Soul is ever and again overwhelmed by the inrush of a sense of present Deity, all-holy and all-gracious, protective, hallowing, encompassing, which transcends all argument, and is its own witness and perfect guarantee. If this fact of our nature be admitted to equal rank with the arguments drawn from our intellectual and our ethical constitution, then we have, as we should expect if God be real, the threefold and harmonious testimony of the three elements—and there are only three—of our nature, the Understanding, the Conscience, and the Emotions. In the last interview I ever had with Dr. Martineau, he gave me his assurance that he deemed this testimony of the Emotions entitled to equal rank and credit with those two other testimonies which he himself had so lucidly and powerfully expounded.

If we sum up Martineau's contribution to religious philosophy, we perceive, no doubt,

that he too had his limitations, and that human thought cannot ultimately rest in all his philosophical positions. His supreme strength lay in the directness and convincingness of his appeal to religious experience. His philosophy was a religion and his religion was a philosophy. They merge and coalesce, and both spring forth from the deepest experiences of the soul. Hence his sermons, his prayers, his hymns, his marvellous canticles, illuminate his philosophy, and his abstrusest treatises thrill with the emotion of his religion. While I am well aware that the present currents of religious philosophy do not largely flow in the channel which he has hewn, yet I believe that his main theses must ultimately be vindicated, and that, though perhaps somewhat dwarfed for the moment, he is destined to stand forth in the history of thought among the master-minds.

Probably the gravest defect in his system is the uncertain note which he sounds between the monistic and the dualistic positions. To say that he is a dualist is at once to condemn him in the mind of our time. There are

indeed two sorts of dualism, of which the one, in my view, is absolutely sound, and the only bulwark against Pantheism, and ultimately the only bulwark of the religious life. That monism which merges *man* in *God*, is to my mind mischievous and false. It stands forth to me as a primary truth of consciousness that the human soul is other than God. I know not how God created me. But I know that I am an individual self, standing confronting him, and not merged in him. And this otherness of the man from God seems to me to be the condition of all prayer, all moral life, the index to the capital facts of temptation, of penitence, of thankfulness, of aspiration, of communion, and of prayer.

But there is another sort of dualist who apparently recognizes in the *universe* elements which did not issue from *God* at the first, but stand confronting him from all eternity, and are even for him the unescapable condition of his activity. Martineau was such a dualist inasmuch as he distinctly declares Space to be a necessary existence by which God's own activity is everywhere conditioned, a condition

from which he cannot get away. Nay, further, he often seems on the point of adding to Space, Matter, and of treating Matter as a permanent self-existing entity, with which God has to deal as best he may, a substance other than himself. The weakness of all such dualisms is that the intellect can never really rest in them. They afford no stable equilibrium. 'If God did not create Space or Matter, who did?' is the inevitable question,—and the mind begins to look out for a greater and original God who really is the source of that universe of which the God alleged seems to be only the finite tenant after all.

I have hinted that Martineau never seemed quite whole-hearted in his acceptance of that theory of Evolution which loomed so largely and so suddenly on the philosophical horizon midway in his philosophical career. He could not get rid of the thought of absolutely *new* elements arising in the universe at certain critical moments in the history of the Cosmos. If *life*, when it first appeared, was not one of these absolutely new things, not

implicitly contained in the original elements of the universe, yet, he thought, *consciousness* certainly was, and so probably again was *self-consciousness*, or consciousness which turns in upon itself and becomes aware of its own personality. Thus there seemed to him to be 'hitches' in Evolution. It is one of the main tasks that lies before the thinkers of the twentieth century to work out a more complete and searching examination of Evolution, in order to decide whether it can be accepted as that absolute master-key to the history of the phenomenal universe which the disciples and successors of Herbert Spencer confidently declare it to be.

Finally, Martineau was drawing to the close of his activity when the new Psychology rose to its present mastery of the current modes of philosophical thinking. That mysterious subliminal consciousness, that dark and hidden personality behind the daylight personality of men, which the new Psychologists allege, would not easily accommodate itself to the system of his ideas. He rested his most characteristic conceptions on a

human personality luminous and clearly defined, which knew nothing of an unconscious consciousness away in the background of being. The thinkers of to-morrow have, if they can, to determine how far these newly studied phenomena are to compel us to re-adjust our conceptions of the human soul and its relations to God. Men like Professor William James have to be dealt with. If any man is in the main to vindicate the philosophy of Martineau, he will have to show that the deepest religious intuitions are real inspirations from God, and not delusions of the night woven from the cobwebs of the mind which have never emerged into daylight consciousness till ready to ape the holy revelations of God.

And so we turn to the momentous question how the religious philosophy of the new time is to stand related to the controversies of the yesterday which has already been swept into the records of the past. What is the outlook for the Twentieth Century?

Taking a broad view over the field, one or two important points, first of all, stand out.

It would be inaccurate to say that Materialism has passed away. There is a *practical* Materialism more deadly than any *philosophical* Materialism, a Materialism which is practically atheistic, not by intellectual conclusion, but by indifference to any aims or purposes save those of the material world, cash, comfort, amusement, fashion, pleasure. That is, alas ! far enough from being dead. But the serious acceptance of Materialism by cultivated thought as the deepest and truest solution open to us of the mystery of the universe is almost dead. Science has a far profounder sense than it had fifty years ago of a Something behind all that the tapes can measure or the scales can weigh. Science scratches the surface of the worlds, and underneath it finds the everlasting rock of a Somewhat that has no material form. Be it what it may, it is other than the hard and visible things which the hand can handle.

In like manner, though a *moral* Atheism too often infects society, *dogmatic* Atheism, direct intellectual denial of God, is now rarely advanced as a philosophy of being. Though

there be multitudes who confess that they cannot find God, there are few who categorically declare that God is a fabrication or a fiction.

Again, Orthodoxy is gone to pieces. History, Science, Philosophy, Criticism, have proved too much for it. The old sweet Evangelical Orthodoxy, with its deep experiences of the spirit, has been cut off from its intellectual basis. The new sacramental and sacerdotal religious forms, fashionable now, are largely the refuge of a profound and disintegrating scepticism, which, no longer convinced of the reality of the witness of the Spirit, catches at material forms and symbols, as the drowning man clutches at sticks or straws, to save a faith which can no longer sustain itself by its own vitality.

Meanwhile there is a certain approximation between Agnosticism and Theism. The graver minds of the agnostic type, on the one hand, are inclined to confess that it is not a happy thing to be wholly without an answer to the deepest questions that perpetually arise in our being, and still less a happy thing to

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be wholly without some helpful sense of relation with the mysterious Power which moves through all things. On the other hand, the Theist is inclined to admit that it is little that he can know of the ultimate nature of God; that he can form no thought of how the Almighty set forth to create the worlds; that the strength of his Theism cannot lie in any full and satisfying answer to the great interrogation concerning the origin of all things, but is rather in the experiences of the living spirit, of contact with an unseen Love and Holiness around him and above, a deep and practical assurance of the present reality of communion and of prayer. The Theist lays less stress now on the God who was in the beginning of beginnings (though he must needs believe in him), and more on the God who here and now is and reveals himself in the aspects of nature, the experiences and drama of life, the deep searchings of the human soul.

— All this concerning the ebbing vitality of Materialism and Atheism, and the more friendly mutual attitude of Agnosticism and

Theism, I say undeterred by the curious phase of thought connected with the name of Ernst Haeckel in Germany, and made vocal here in England by the Clarion voice of Mr. Blatchford. Prof. Haeckel is a genuine and honoured man of science. His researches lay along the lines of those of Darwin a generation and more ago. His demonstration that the evolution of the embryo of the individual runs parallel with that of the race was one of the greatest and most brilliant contributions ever made to the science of living things. But he belongs to the generation of Tyndall, and his mind was set and hardened long ago in the mould of the materialistic thinkers. He has conceived too great a contempt for all theologians ever really to weigh and consider the main theological argument. And Sir Oliver Lodge, with his keen and alert mind all living in the present, is a safer guide to the true relations lying between science and religion than the brave old veteran of the Jena schools.

Drawing together to a focus studies scattered over many years of life, for these

present lectures, I have been impressed with two things chiefly. Let me for my final word tell you what they are.

The first is how often thinkers the most widely divided in word or school, seem almost to draw into identity of meaning. If we could get right behind words to the very kernel of the mind, would there be so wide a difference after all? Spencer and Tyndall know the same profound awe before the Unknowable, or that promise and potency in matter, as Newman and Parker experience in the presence of the Living God. Even Bradlaugh's vehement Atheism is but the garb of his passionate yearning for justice, mercy, truth. All stand in presence of that which they cannot fathom. They begin to speak of this *primaeval* mystery and some fall into a positive, the others a negative vocabulary. They are gazing on a concave mirror. These describe its concave side, those that obverse side which is necessarily convex.

And the second thing which has come home to me so strongly is how the problem

of Agnosticism and Theism is not a single problem but two problems locked together,—the one mainly of intellectual, the other of practical interest.

The first problem is how the universe began to be, what is the power at the driving-wheel, a problem of origins, of how things came to be. Every solution which we can propose is choked with what to our intellects, so cribbed, cabined, and confined, seem contradictions. We cannot conceive Space either bounded or unbounded. We cannot conceive Time either having a beginning or having no beginning. We cannot conceive Matter either always there, or created out of nothing. We cannot conceive how God himself comes to be

Nevertheless the human intellect will never consent to leave off asking this supreme question. It will always demand an answer. Agnosticism is not an attitude of permanent equilibrium for minds of our make. And we shall get answers which satisfy more or less for a time. But the question will go on being asked while the race of man endures.

But the second problem—the problem in which resides the urgent, the thrilling practical interest—is the question whether there is about us, or is not, here and now, however the world came into being, a Living Goodness, Wisdom, Love, holding the universe to his breast. Is it all blank, this vast expanse, or does it thrill with a life that is related to our own? Is there God there, God whom we can love, God who loves us? Is communion, prayer and its response, enduring fact now and for ever? Are the deep trusts that well up in the heart, the voice of the eternal truth within us, or are they delusions, snares, some cobwebs woven in the windowless chambers of our subliminal consciousness? That is the practical problem which gives all its importance, all its breathless interest, to the mighty inquiry which has pervaded these lectures and pervades the whole higher literature of man.

And while we do well to try to answer this practical problem too on the lines of philosophical thought, and to test our answer by considerations drawn from our intellectual

processes, yet, as the problem is practical, so, as a matter of fact, its real effective answer depends on our practical life. There is provision in the life of man—in that organ which Francis W. Newman calls the Soul—for the continuous satisfaction for its demand for God. The pressure of competition, the struggle for wealth, the craze for pleasure, every evil passion, and all mere dead indifference, are ever making for the decay of Religion in our midst. These must be confronted by purity of heart and truth in the inward parts. These and these alone can permanently establish such belief in God, as shall have not merely the cold precision of the intellect, but also the fervent glow of faith. It is wise and right to strive to show that Theism is intellectually justifiable, as I, with all my strength, believe it is. But for its health and vitality down the generations the belief in God depends on those profounder elements of life which involve the Conscience and the Soul.

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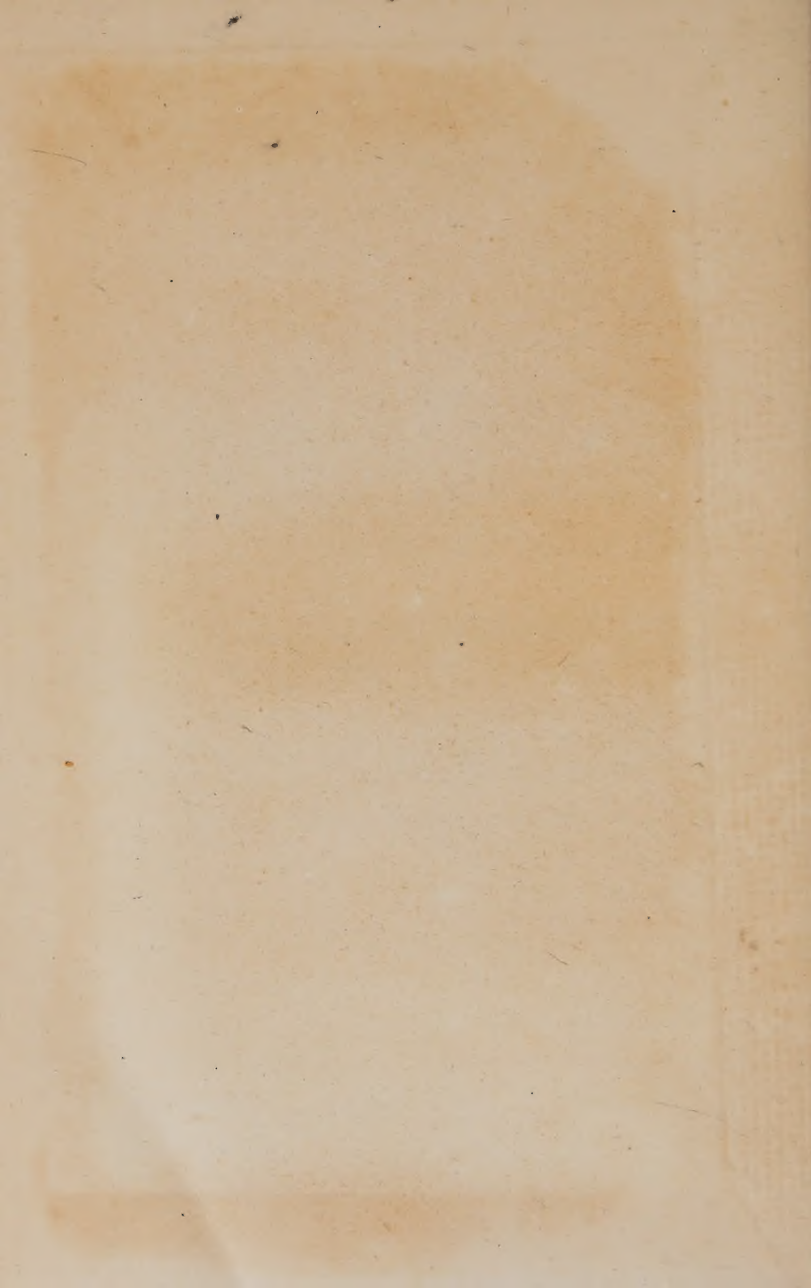
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